

THE BIBLE AND ROMAN CATHOLICISM



Buddy Dano, Pastor
Divine Viewpoint Bible Studies
www.divineviewpoint.com

May 1987

THE BIBLE AND ROMAN CATHOLICISM

Table of Contents

The Bible and Roman Catholicism as History.....	1
The Tradition of Romanism.....	8
Peter and the Roman Catholic Church.....	13
The Papal Succession.....	19
The One True Church	23
Temporal Authority	27
Papal Infallibility.....	31
The Catholic Doctrine of Sin	34
Are Catholics Christians or Marians?.....	36
Purgatory	43
The Catholic Church and the Celibacy of the Priesthood	47
The Miracles of the Catholic Church.....	50
The Catholic Rosary.....	53
Catholic Confession and Absolution	55
Catholic Indulgences	59
Catholic Works of Supererogation	62
Catholic Baptism	64
Catholic Images.....	68
The Catholic Church and Relics	71
Saints	74
The Papacy and Social Action	78
Chart of Differences Between Doctrines in the Christian and Roman Catholic Churches	81
Historical Chart of the Christian and Catholic Church	82
Conclusion	84

May 1987

THE BIBLE AND ROMAN CATHOLICISM AS HISTORY

The Roman Catholic Church **does not** want the "common people" to read the Bible. This statement will be immediately challenged and denied by them. But quotes by various Popes and other so-called high authorities of the Church will disprove them.

For instance, on the title page of the Roman Catholic English Bible, dated in April 1778, there appears a letter from PIUS VI to the Archbishop of Florence wherein he urged Catholics to read the Bible. "At a time when a great many books which grossly attack the Catholic religion are being circulated, even among the unlearned to the great destruction of souls, you judge exceedingly well that the faithful should be urged to read the Holy Scriptures, for they are the most abundant source which ought to be left open to everyone, to draw from them purity of morals and of doctrines, and to eradicate the errors which are so wholly spread in these corrupt times."

Now against the apparently present statement we must face the facts of ancient and modern history. The Council of Toulon in 1239 actually forbade the laity to possess any of the books of the Bible except the Psalter and Beeviary, the latter a service containing portions of Scripture, and they strictly prohibited their translation into any vernacular.

Some 300 years later, in the index of prohibited books prepared by the Order of the Council of Trent, that prohibition was renewed. The fourth rule of the index reads as follows: "Since it is manifest from experience that, if sacred books be allowed to be circulated everywhere indiscriminately in the vulgar tongue, more harm than good may arise through the rashness of men in this respect. They must abide by the judgment of the Bishop or Inquisitor that they may be able to allow the reading of these books translated by Catholic authors into the vulgar tongue to those whom they shall have found capable of deriving from this reading no loss, but in-

crease of faith and piety. This faculty they must have in writing, but any man who, without such faculty, shall presume to read or have them in his possession, cannot receive absolution of his sin till he has first returned the book to the ordinary. But booksellers who shall have sold or in any way granted these books, shall forfeit the value of these books to the Bishop."

So by the Council of Trent, which pronounced a curse on all who refused to acknowledge its decisions as infallible and therefore, of course, unalterable, only those whom the bishops deem suitable may read the Scriptures in the vernacular, and then only when given authority to do so in writing.

Coming down to later times, an encyclical letter of Pope Leo XII, dated May 8, 1824 reads, "You are aware, venerable brethren, that a certain society called the Bible Society strolls with effrontery throughout the world, which society, contrary to the well-known decree of the Council of Trent, labors with all its might and by every means to translate, or rather pervert, the Holy Scriptures in the vulgar language of every nation... We, in conformity with our apostolic duty, exhort you to turn away your flock by all means from these poisonous pastures."

The Irish Roman Catholic bishops passed the encyclical on to their priests in a covering letter from which also the following extract is taken: "Our Holy Father recommends to the observance of the faithful a rule of the congregation of the index which prohibits the perusal of the sacred Scriptures in the vulgar tongue without the sanction of the competent authorities. HIS HOLINESS WISELY REMARKS THAT MORE ILL THAN GOOD IS FOUND TO RESULT FROM THE INDISCRIMINATE PERUSAL OF THEM ON ACCOUNT OF THE MALICE OR INFIRMITY OF MEN. HENCE, DEAREST BRETHREN, SUCH BOOKS HAVE BEEN AND EVER WILL BE EXECRATED BY THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, AND WHY SHE HAS FRE-

QUENTLY ORDERED THEM TO BE COMMITTED TO THE FLAMES.”

Now with such authoritative backing, the confiscation and public burning of Bibles in the past can hardly be wondered at. In countries where the Roman Church has sufficient influence, it is still being done today. Such action should not be tolerated in protestant countries. Rome is still at heart unwilling to place the Bible in the hands of the common people, which is evidenced by a statement made by Cardinal Wiseman. “But though the Scriptures may be here permitted, we do not urge them upon the people, we do not encourage them. We do not spread them to the utmost, certainly not.”

In spite of Pope Pius IV’s letter, the Scriptures are not “left to everyone to draw from them purity of morals and doctrine.” Quite the reverse is true. The established custom of the Roman Church is to publish Bibles with notations, so that they shall be read in the sense which accords with its doctrines.

The encyclical letter of Pius IX dated December 8, 1849 says, “THE FAITHFUL UNDER YOUR CHARGE MAY BE EARNESTLY REMINDED WITH ESPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, THAT NO PERSON WHATEVER IS WARRANTED TO CONFIDE IN HIS OWN JUDGMENT AS TO THEIR TRUE MEANING, IF OPPOSED TO THE HOLY MOTHER CHURCH, WHO ALONE, AND NO OTHER, HAS RECEIVED THE COMMISSION FROM CHRIST TO WATCH OVER THE FAITH COMMITTED TO HER TRUST AND TO DECIDE UPON THE TRUE SENSE AND INTERPRETATION OF THE SACRED WRITINGS.”

Now from this it can be seen that although the Roman Catholic Church acknowledges the true inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, those Scriptures after all are not the final authority, but the Roman Church, which alone has the right to decide and interpret their meaning. That the Scriptures have the right to be in the hands of the common people is evident from the Scriptures themselves, and that provides a sufficient reason for the ban placed upon them by the papal authorities **since the teachings of the Bible and**

the doctrines of Rome are OFTEN POLES APART.

NOW WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

1. In the Old Testament days the whole multitude of Israel gathered at Sinai to hear the Lord speak. Moses was ordered to commit to writing all the commandments that God had given him. Exodus 34:27, 28, “And the Lord said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel. And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.”

The writing was to be read in the ears of all the people every seventh year at the Feast of Tabernacles. Deuteronomy 31:9-13, “And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests, the sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and unto all the elders of Israel. And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the Feast of Tabernacles, When all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God in the place which He shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing. Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law: And that their children which have not known any thing, may hear, and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it.”

Now of record of this being done is found in Nehemiah 8:1-18 where it says, “Also day by day, from the first day unto the last day, Ezra read in the book of the law of God.” The reading of Scriptures, Nehemiah 8, led to a change of mind. Nehemiah 9. Joshua was commanded to meditate upon the written law of the Lord day and night, that he might observe to do according to all that was written therein. It was not to “Depart out of his mouth,” which meant that all the commands he gave to the people were to be ordered by it. Joshua 1:7, 8, “Only be thou strong and

very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses My servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth: but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."

The commandment to the children of Israel was in Deuteronomy 6:6-9 and 11:18-21. "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine mind: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk to them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates." "Therefore shall ye lay upon these My Words in your mind and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates: That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth."

These passages show us how the Word of God, first oral and then committed to writing, formed the beginning of the Old Testament Scriptures, and was to be made known and to be made familiar to the Israelite people, and woven into their everyday life.

When the theocracy changed to a monarchy, each new king, as he ascended to the throne, was to write out a copy of the Bible, the book of the law for himself. Deuteronomy 17:18, 19, "And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites: And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may

learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them."

The Psalms abundantly demonstrate that the Old Testament canon, as far as it then existed, was familiar ground to God's chosen people. As a standard of faith and conduct, it stood at the very center of their national life.

Psalm 1 describes the blessedness of the man whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates therein day and night. "He is like a tree planted by the rivers of water that bringeth forth its fruit in its season and whose leaf does not wither."

In Psalm 19 it speaks of the perfection of God's Word and of its practical effect in the lives of those who keep it. It is better than gold, sweeter than honey, enlightening, warning, rewarding.

Nearly every one of the 176 verses of Psalm 119 mention the Word of God under one title or another. Verse 9, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his ways? By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word." Verse 11, "Thy Word have I hid in my heart, that I may not sin against Thee." Verse 16, "I will delight myself in Thy statutes, I will not forget thy Word." Verse 104, "Through Thy precepts I get understanding, therefore I hate every false way." Verse 105, "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

Now when you come into New Testament times we find the Lord Jesus Christ Himself as a boy increasing in wisdom until His knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures amazes the doctors in the temple. Luke 2:46, 47, "And it came to pass, that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers." His mind was saturated with the Scriptures even at that early age.

Later, as the Lord Jesus Christ met the Tempter in the desert **He could instantly lay hold of the Scriptures exactly to His need**, and the thrice repeated, "It is written." By the application of the Word of God to His experience He drove the devil from Him. Matthew

4:1-11. Matthew 4:4, "But He answered and said, 'It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.'" Luke 4:4, "And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word of God.'"

The Lord Jesus Christ never rebuked the Jews of His day for reading the Scriptures. He rebuked them for refusing to obey what they read in Scripture. "Ye search the Scriptures: for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me. And ye will not come unto Me, that ye might have life," John 5:39, 40. When the Sanhedrin, the Sadducees scoffed at the resurrection, He said, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God," Matthew 22:29.

The Pope and Roman Church councils say that the ordinary man runs into danger of error when he reads the Bible for himself. **The Lord Jesus Christ said that the danger of going astray lies in NOT reading the Bible.** Who should we believe? God or man? Well, the apostle Peter answers that question himself, "We ought to obey God rather than man," Acts 5:29.

Now Paul, at Lystra, found a certain young disciple named Timothy, the son of a Jewess, but his father was a Greek. Paul took Timothy with him to be his companion in service. Two of Paul's epistles written toward the end of his life were addressed to this young man. In 2 Timothy 3:15 he says, "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." **The Holy Scriptures which Timothy had known from childhood, had not lead him into error but into the knowledge of salvation through Christ.** How did he get that early knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures? Well, we find the answer in 2 Timothy 1:5, "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also." This knowledge came from his grandmother, Lois, and his mother Eunice.

Just one more passage. When the Jews at Berea heard the teaching of Paul and Si-

las concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, "They received the Word with all readiness of mind." But they did not stop there. They turned to the Old Testament Scriptures. "Examining the Scriptures daily whether these things were so." They had the Scriptures in their hands. They searched them, and they took them as the standard by which the teaching was to be tested. They were not rebuked for so doing. On the contrary, they received high commendation. "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed," Acts 17:11, 12.

Now all of these passages refer to the Old Testament Scriptures and this could not be otherwise because at that time the New Testament was not written. But nowhere in the Bible is there the least suggestion that the New Testament Scriptures as they came to be written, should be treated differently from the Old.

Peter, in his epistle, 2 Peter 3:15, 16, mentions some of Paul's epistles which at that later date had come into circulation, and classified them with the "other Scriptures," thus putting them on a par with the Old Testament. "And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation: even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you: As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things: in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction."

The Roman Catholic Church quotes this passage as proving the necessity for the Church to ban the Bible to common people, because Peter mentions certain unlearned and ignorant souls having wrested Paul's writings, or part of them which were difficult, to their own destruction. Peter truly warns against the danger of wresting the Scriptures, that is, **twisting their meaning**, but he certainly does not warn his readers against reading them, or suggest that only the Pope and the Council must read and interpret them. What he says is, "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before,

beware, lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness,” 2 Peter 3:17. But immediately he goes on to say, “**Grow in GRACE by the knowledge of our Saviour Jesus Christ,**” verse 18.

How were they to grow in GRACE and grow in knowledge? The answer is found in 1 Peter 2:1, 2, “Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby.” **Our spiritual growth and development depends upon our regular prayerful reading of the Word of God, with minds ready to obey its every precept.**

According to the Word of God, one of the spiritual gifts of the ascended Lord Jesus Christ to His Church is “teachers.” Ephesians 4:11, “And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.” All true children of God recognize that comes in receiving the teaching of the Word of God from pastor-teachers. We are told, “**Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the Word and doctrine.**” 1 Timothy 5:17 along with Hebrews 13:7, 17, “Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.” “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.”

But this is different from the teaching that would deny us direct access to the Scriptures, and bid us to accept an interpreter instead. There is a teacher promised and given to every believer, whom the Roman Catholic Church forgets or ignores in practice. Before the Lord Jesus Christ left His disciples, He said to them in His discourse in the upper room, “**And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him, but ye know Him, for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you,**” John

14:16, 17. “**But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My Name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you,**” John 14:26. “**When the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all Truth,**” John 16:13.

The promise of God the Holy Spirit was not for the apostles alone, but for **ALL BELIEVERS**. He came upon the 120 gathered at Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost. Acts 1:15 and 2:1-4. He was promised to the thousands who believed on that day, Acts 2:38, and that promise extended to generations of believers unborn, both Jew and Gentile, Acts 2:38, 39, “**Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.**”

Now Rome’s insistence on priestly guidance in reading the Scriptures expressly contradicts the statement of 1 John 2:27, addressed to all believers, “But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, AND YE NEED NOT THAT ANY MAN TEACH YOU, but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is Truth, and is no life, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him.” It also runs counter to what Paul wrote to the Corinthians and to the Thessalonian churches. “**I speak as to wise men, judge ye what I say,**” 1 Corinthians 10:15. “**Prove all things, hold fast that which is good,**” 1 Thessalonians 5:21. In both of these passages the right and the duty of private judgment is upheld not merely by Paul, but also by the Holy Spirit, whose inspirations of these very epistles Rome acknowledges. The exhortations here are not addressed to Popes or priests, for the papacy did not then exist, not even to Church elders, but “**to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ.**”

THE CANON OF SCRIPTURE

“Without the interpretation of a Divine infallible teaching apostolate, distinct from the Bible, we could never know with Divine cer-

tainty which books constituted the inspired Scriptures, or whether the copies we possess today agree with the originals." This was taken from "*The Question Box*," page 76, The Pulist Press, N.Y.

Needless to say, Rome claims to be "the Divine infallible apostolate teaching," which can teach with Divine certainty which books constitute the inspired Scriptures. The question of her infallibility will be dealt with later in our study. Her giving to Church tradition equal authority with the written Word of God invalidates her claim even as a reliable teaching authority, let alone an infallible one, and her acceptance of the Apocryphal books as part of the canonical Scriptures accentuates her untrustworthiness as a guide.

If we reject Rome's authority to decide what books are canonical and what are not, to what authority can we appeal? That is a fair question, and not one which can be fully answered in just a few words. But we can solve it and face it starting first with the Old Testament Scriptures.

The books of the Old Testament, from Genesis to Malachi, were written over a period of roughly 1000 years. The human authorship of a number of them, especially the later historical books, cannot now be certainly determined.

The historian Josephus (born in A.D. 37) and Jewish tradition, as well as internal evidence, point to Ezra as the one probably responsible for gathering together the various Old Testament writings into what, in the time of the Lord and His apostles, was acknowledged as the Canon of Scripture. It was to those collected writings that our Lord constantly appealed as the Scriptures, calling them the Word of God. These Hebrew Scriptures, in accepted use long before our Lord was born, contained all the books found in our Protestant Old Testament, though their order is a little different.

Between 285 and 247 B.C. the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek at Alexandria for use in the Greek speaking world, and to them were added a number of Apocryphal books AFTER the completion of the Old Testament Canon. The Palestinian Jews refused to acknowledge them as part of the Scriptures. Both the Hebrew and Septuagint

Greek Scriptures were in current use during the time of our Lord and His apostles. He and His disciples in their writings quoted from the Old Testament Scriptures some 350 times. About 300 of these quotations are from the Septuagint, **but THERE IS NOT A SINGLE QUOTATION TAKEN FROM THE APOCRYPHAL BOOKS.**

Now that argument may be negative only, but it is too SIGNIFICANT to be passed over, and by itself carries more weight **against** the Divine authority of the Apocrypha than all the positive pronouncements to the contrary made by fallible Popes and Councils in later years, when the tide of corruption in morals and doctrine was running deep and strong.

When Jerome translated the Bible into Latin between A.D. 382 and 404, **he did NOT translate the Apocrypha**, and in common with many others of his own and later times, **refused to acknowledge its canonicity.** The translation of these books into Latin was the work of others, and in no way was Jerome responsible for their inclusion in the Vulgate version of the Bible.

Though some references to the Apocryphal writings are found in early Church literature, it was not until the Councils of Laodicea and Carthage in A.D. 363 and 397 that we find them listed as an actual part of the Old Testament. But even this did not signify anything like universal acceptance, and the controversy continued.

In the 16th century the reformers rejected them, and the Council of Trent, which was especially called to set up the reformation movement, reaffirmed their canonicity. There never has been a universal acceptance of the Apocryphal books, and no papal decrees can give to them an authority which intrinsically they do not possess.

The canonical books of the New Testament were all written during a period of some 40 years. A few of them appeared first in Palestine, a larger number in Asia Minor, yet others in Greece, and a few in Rome. The epistles were expressed sometimes to specific existing churches, with indications that some of them at least were intended for wider circulation, as in Colossians 4:16 and 1 Thessalonians 5:27.

Others were for individuals, **but the Truths they enunciated were of universal application**, and it does not therefore surprise us to find them in the course of time widely scattered, and acknowledged as Divinely inspired and authoritative. In days when communications were much more slow and difficult than they are in our time, this process was not rapid.

But even before the writing of the New Testament was completed, we find Paul's epistles classed with Old Testament books as "Scripture" by the apostle Peter, as found in 2 Peter 3:15, 16, "And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation: even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you: As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things: in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction."

In the writings of the early Church fathers we can trace the way in which they came to be used in the churches, and the steady spread of their influence. To mention only a few: **Clement of Rome**, A.D. 95, makes reference to Matthew, Luke, Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Hebrews, 1 Timothy and 1 Peter. **Polycarp**, A.D. 110, reproduces phrases from ten of Paul's epistles and 1 Peter. **Ignatius**, A.D. 110, quotes Matthew, 1 Peter, 1 John, and nine of Paul's epistles, and his letters bear the impress of three other Gospels.

Irenaeus, A.D. 130-200, quotes most of the New Testament books, which in his day had come to be known as the "Gospels and the Apostles," as the Old Testament books were known as the "Law and the Prophets."

Tertilliam of Carthage, A.D. 160-200, living while the manuscripts of the epistles were still in existence, speaks of the Christian Scriptures as the New Testament. **Origen** of Alexandria, A.D. 185-254, accepted the authority of the 27 books of the New Testament just as we have them now, though not sure of the authorship of Hebrews, nor are we sure of it today, though fully accepted it as Divinely inspired and a part of the Canon, and doubtful about that of James, 2 Peter and 2 and 3 John. **Eusebius** of Caesarea,

A.D. 264-340, who lived through the Diocletian persecution, prepared for Emperor Constantine 50 Bibles, written by careful copyists, the New Testament part of which contained all the books of our New Testament, and NO OTHERS, though even then some people doubted the inspiration of James, 2 Peter and 2 and 3 John.

Thus we see that even before the Councils of Laodicea and Carthage, the New Testament as we have it now, with query marks against four of the smaller epistles, was acknowledged as canonical and of Divine authority. The Council of Carthage, A.D. 397, give its formal ratification of the 27 books as we now have them, but note well that it did not make the Canon, but only ratified the judgment of the churches, and accepted for itself the New Testament as the inspired Word of God. Up to this time, the papacy had not risen, Leo I in 440-461 being the first of the bishops of Rome to claim supremacy over the whole Church, though many, many years were to pass before that supremacy was acknowledged, and then only in the western churches.

The Church of Rome, as we know it today, was non-existent when the canonicity of the New Testament was recognized and accepted. Thus the Canon of the Old and the New Testaments was universally accepted by the Christian Church long before the papacy came into being.

THE CHURCH OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST THROUGHOUT THE WORLD IS NOT DEPENDENT UPON ROME FOR THE CERTAINTY OF WHAT BOOKS CONSTITUTE THE INSPIRED SCRIPTURES. The Bible is self-authenticating and its authority in the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ everywhere is inherent. It has proved its authority in the minds of men as some have said, "It finds me."

The Bible has proved itself as it has been read and taught and expounded in the world by the spiritual deliverance He has wrought. There is no need to defend the Bible. It is like a lion let it out. The Bible is "the power of God unto salvation." The Bible is the mind of Christ. The Bible is sharper than any two-edged sword. Christ Himself taught the Bible and He used the five books of

Moses, the Psalms and all the prophets. He put His stamp of approval on them and never ever once mentioned the Apocrypha, **which are contrary to the GRACE teaching of the**

Bible. Where they present works for salvation, the Bible teaches GRACE for salvation.

THE TRADITION OF ROMANISM

The claims that the Roman Catholic Church makes for herself are unlimited. She has never ceased to declare them. In fact, there has been an **INCREASE** of them down through the centuries. The Pope claims to be the vicar of Christ on earth through a long succession of Popes, which is supposed to start with the apostle Peter. The Church of which the Pope is the visible head is to be acknowledged as the true Catholic Church, universally in her sway, all other churches whatever being schismatic, in a state of rebellion against her lawful authority.

She claims infallibility for her doctrines and practices, which must be received on pain of perdition. She alone has the right to decide the meaning and interpretation of the Holy Scriptures. In her alone is salvation found. She claims worldwide temporal, as well as spiritual, authority, all civil and military governments being under her control by Divine appointment. **That she has not been able to implement the claims makes no difference to its validity so far as she is concerned.**

On what authority does she base these stupendous claims? First, she makes her appeal to Holy Writ, for **she acknowledges the Divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures**, and therefore the Divine authority of the sacred Scriptures. Secondly, she appeals to the tradition and the pronouncements of the various Popes and Church Councils.

Let us first consider her appeal to the Scriptures. The Roman Catholic Bible is the Vulgate, which was translated into Latin by Jerome, the Old Testament, except for the Psalms, direct from the Hebrew, and the New Testament from the Greek. At the close of the 15th century the knowledge of Hebrew and Greek had sunk to a low level, and where the Bible was read, it was the Vulgate which was in general use, though there were members of the Council of Trent, that **knew that Jerome's translation was not at all perfect and desired to have a new transla-**

tion. But the labor involved was great and moreover, the Protestant reformers based their arguments on the original Hebrew and Greek texts, so the majority of the Council decided that they must recognize one text as their "court of appeal" and fell back upon the commonly used, 1000 year old translation of Jerome as the standard.

Thus it came about that all Romanish teaching, reasoning, together with all written notes, were based upon the Latin Vulgate. The Church of Rome can plead no authority for setting aside the Hebrew and Greek originals and substituting the Latin translation as the standard of appeal. **If a translation is made the standard, then the translator MUST have the same degree of Divine inspiration as the original writers.** But Romanists themselves acknowledge that the VULGATE IS NOT PERFECT.

The Vulgate edition of the Bible also includes the Apocrypha, which was not translated from the Hebrew, but from the Septuagint Greek. **Jerome's own list of the canonical books of the Old Testament DOES NOT include the Apocryphal books, whose Divine inspirations he REFUSED TO ACCEPT.** He was not responsible for their Latin translation, but notwithstanding they were included as an integral part of the Vulgate Bible. The Apocrypha, in Tobias 12:9 and 2 Maccabees 12:46, countenances the two Romanish doctrines of salvation by works and prayers for the dead, **neither** of which are found in the Canonical Scriptures. This may account for the inclusion of the Apocrypha in the Roman Catholic Bible.

Here is a quote from the Latin Vulgate Bible of the Roman Catholic Church: Page 1081, 2 Maccabees 12:46, "It is therefore a holy and a wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins." On page 522 of the Latin Vulgate we read in Tobias 12:9, "For alms delivereth from death, and the same is that which purgeth away

sins, and maketh to find mercy and life everlasting.”

It is also noteworthy that the Apocrypha was **NOT ACCEPTED AS DIVINELY INSPIRED by the Jews of our Lord's day**, and though He and His disciples quoted the Old Testament more than 300 times in the New Testament, **NOT ONCE DID THEY APPEAL TO THE APOCRYPHAL WRITINGS.**

We are told in Romans 3:2 that the oracles of God had been entrusted to the Jewish people, yet neither our Lord nor His apostles ever rebuked them for rejecting the Apocryphal books.

The early Church fathers also do not quote them as being on the same level as the canonical books. The use of quotations from the canonical books to bolster Romanish claims and doctrines will be examined in our study later on.

Now concerning the appeals to tradition and Church Councils. **Great areas of Roman Catholic doctrine HAVE NO SCRIPTURAL SUPPORT WHATEVER**, since they lie outside the range of Bible revelation, and for these another source of authority has been found in what is called “Tradition and the Decrees of the Church Councils.” Rome claims that outside the written Word of God in the New Testament, there is a body of oral teaching, handed down from our Lord and the apostles generation by generation.

Thus the Council of Trent declares: “This Council perceiving that this truth and discipline are contained both in the written books and in unwritten traditions which have come down to us either received by the apostles from the lips of Christ himself, or transmitted by the same apostles under the direction of the Holy Spirit, following the example of the orthodox fathers, doth receive and reverence with equal piety and veneration all the books as well of the Old and the New Testament, the same God being the authority of both, and also the aforesaid traditions pertaining both to faith and manners, whether from Christ himself, or dictated by the Holy Spirit and preserved in the Catholic Church by continual succession.”

And again, following a list of the Old and New Testament books, in which the Apocryphal books appear, the decree concludes: “WHOSOEVER SHALL NOT RECEIVE AS CANONICAL ALL THESE BOOKS AND EVERY PART OF THEM AS THEY ARE COMMONLY READ IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND ARE CONTAINED IN THE OLD VULGATE LATIN EDITION, OR SHALL KNOWINGLY AND DELIBERATELY DESPISE THE AFORESAID TRADITIONS, LET HIM BE ACCURSED.”

Here we have brought together for us the sources of Romanish authority. First the Vulgate Old and New Testaments, including the Apocrypha, all in the Latin tongue, and of course, to be understood as explained and interpreted by the “Holy Mother Church.”

And secondly, a body of oral tradition, supposed to have been handed down generation by generation in unbroken succession, wither from the Lord Himself, or from the apostles enlightened by the Holy Spirit. Rome has been challenged to disclose what that body of tradition is, what are its contents beyond what has already been announced by the Papacy, **BUT SHE HAS NEVER MADE IT KNOWN.** It can only be concluded that **she prefers to have its substance secret, that she may draw further upon its hidden store as later circumstances require.**

Yet even this does not complete the picture, for Church Councils have brought in **another source of authority.** All priests are ordained and they have to subscribe to the creed of Pope Pius IV, which declares, “I also profess and undoubtedly receive all the other things delivered, defined and declared by the secret canons and general councils and particularly by the Holy Council of Trent.”

So at last we see the whole papal authority set before us, broader and broader with the passage of centuries, until it is wide enough to bear the entire superstructure.

With regard to tradition, it needs to be observed at the outset that **the Romish Church really does not possess any information concerning the mind of Christ or His apostles WHICH IS NOT EQUALLY**

OPEN TO ALL CHRISTIANS. Furthermore, THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT ANY TRADITIONS HAVE BEEN LEFT TO THE CHURCH BEYOND THE TRUTHS CONTAINED IN THE OLD AND THE NEW TESTAMENTS.

Admittedly, the Romish Church does bring forward certain passages which she claims as evidence. One of these is John 20:30, "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book." This verse certainly established that there were signs or miracles of our Lord which are not recorded in the Gospel of John. Many of them were probably recorded in Matthew, Mark and Luke, all of which were in existence long before John's Gospel. But there may have been others which are not written in any book. But if this were so, there is not the least hint that these oral traditions were committed to the apostles for transmission to later generations as Rome claims.

Notice what the next verse says. John 20:31, "But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, you might have life through His Name." The written record then was sufficient to establish the fact that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and sufficient also to create and establish faith that brings eternal life. **NO SUPPLEMENTARY TRADITION WAS OR IS NEEDED.**

There are other passages along this same line. "Therefore brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle," 2 Thessalonians 2:15. "Now we command you brethren, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us," 2 Thessalonians 3:6. "Now I praise you that ye remember me in all things, and hold fast the traditions, even as I delivered them to you," 1 Corinthians 11:2.

Here we have three references to "traditions," but these three epistles were written long before the New Testament Canon was formed, before the early oral teaching was

committed to writing to form the New Testament. The epistles in question were written to confirm the oral teaching already given, which was not, as Rome could suggest, something given to supplement written Scriptures already in use, in order to complete the body of revealed Truth.

Now there are a few other passages that we can look at which will show us how fallacious Rome's appeal to Scripture is, and as we do this, we must remember that these passages are taken from the New Testament, **which Divine authority the Roman Catholic Church acknowledges.** Jude 3, "It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." Now Jude's epistle is a general one, not written to any Pope or Bishop or particular church, as for instance the Church of Rome, but it is written as it says, "To them that are set apart by God the Father and preserved in Jesus Christ and called," in other words, to ALL TRUE BELIEVERS.

"The faith" therefore was not delivered to Peter and his claimed successors, but to all believers. Furthermore, it was delivered "ONCE," not to be added to by later generations of Popes or Church Councils.

We are reminded of the solemn warning found at the end of the New Testament, almost in its last words. "For I testify unto every man that heareth the Words of the prophecy of this Book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this Book. And if any man shall take away from the Words of this Book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the Book of life, and out of the Holy City, and from the things which are written in the Book," Revelation 22:18, 19.

True, the Church of Rome denies having added any new doctrine to the original revelation, saying that all she has done is to draw from the treasury of apostolic tradition and develop it under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. **But this is obviously false, for too many of the doctrines based on so-called "apostolic traditions" CONFLICT VITALLY**

WITH TRUTHS REVEALED IN THE WRITTEN WORD. "God is the Father of lights, with whom is no variation, variability, neither shadow of turning," James 1:17.

Peter says to the believers to whom he writes, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever," 1 Peter 1:23. And then he adds, "And this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you," 1 Peter 1:25b.

Now in Acts we have six recorded sermons, or addresses, of Peter's, so we know what Gospel he preached. **Never once did he go one step beyond the doctrine clearly set forth in the New Testament.** There was certainly no place in Peter's messages for doctrines based on tradition supplemental to the written Word. Yet his Gospel sufficed under the power of God the Holy Spirit to bring thousands of listeners into the experience of the new birth.

Again in 2 Timothy 3:16,17 we read, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Since the Scriptures are not only able to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 2 Timothy 3:15, "But are also able to make us perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work," **WHAT NEED IS THERE FOR THE ADDITION OF ORAL TRADITIONS???**

The Lord Jesus Christ put the devil to flight with His threefold, "It is written," prefacing each quotation from the Old Testament Scriptures in Matthew 4:4, 7, 10. "But He answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." "Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." "Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

He discomfited those who refuted His Messianic claims with words quoted from the

Old Testament Scriptures. Matthew 22:41-46, "While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, Saying, What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He? They say unto Him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call Him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on my right hand, till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool? If David then call Him Lord, how is He his son? And no man was able to answer Him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask Him any more questions."

And He also comforted His distressed and perplexed disciples by "expounding unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself," Luke 24:25-27. But He sternly rebuked the Pharisees because they made the commandments of God of none effect by their traditions. Matthew 15:6, "And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition." And even transgressed those commandments, Matthew 15:3, "But He answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?" And He quoted the words of the prophet Isaiah against them. "This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoreth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me, but in vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men," Matthew 15:8, 9.

The following extract is taken from a Roman Catholic book, called *"The Question Box,"* written by Bernard Conway of the Paulists fathers, with the authority of the superior general of that order, the "Censor Librorum" and under the imprimatur of Cardinal Hayes, Roman Catholic Archbishop of New York in 1929. The title pages states that over three million copies have been printed.

The question is... "Is not the Bible the **only source** of faith, the one means whereby the teachings of Christ have been handed down to us? The answer is... **"NO. THE BIBLE IS NOT THE ONLY SOURCE OF FAITH AS LUTHER TAUGHT in the 16th century, FOR WITHOUT THE INTERPRE-**

TATION OF A DIVINE INFALLIBLE TEACHING APOSTOLATE DISTINCT FROM THE BIBLE, we could never know with Divine certainty which books constituted the inspired Scriptures, or whether the copies we possess today agree with the originals. THE BIBLE ITSELF IS BUT A DEAD LETTER CALLING FOR A DIVINE INTERPRETER. It is not arranged in a systematic form like a creed or catechism. It is often obscure and hard to be understood as St. Peter says of the epistles of Paul. 2 Peter 3:16 cf Acts 8:30, 31. It is open to false interpretation. Moreover, a number of revealed truths have been handed down to us by Divine traditions only."

Now there Rome stands revealed, for she arrogates to herself the title of THE DIVINE INFALLIBLE TEACHING APOSTOLATE, DISTINCT FROM THE BIBLE. Again

notice her words that "the Bible is a dead letter." Well, let us put up against that phrase this passage, "For the Word of God is ALIVE, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart," Hebrews 4:12.

ON WHICH SIDE DO WE STAND?

As Peter said while dying, "Of all the things he saw and heard," he said, "the Word of God is more reliable." He saw some interesting things, like the Lord transfigured before his eyes, and he heard also the voice of God the Father saying, "This is My beloved Son, hear ye Him." And yet Peter while dying said, "The Word of God is more reliable..."

PETER AND THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Before we enter into a detailed examination of the many claims the Roman Catholic Church makes for herself, it is necessary to go into the claims that the Roman Church has made for the apostle Peter, because it is upon these that Rome's own demands for supremacy are based.

No true Christian, either Protestant or Romanist, would desire to rob the apostle Peter of any part of the honor due to him. He is a commanding personality in the Gospels and the book of Acts, and in his own two brief epistles. He is a lovable figure full of human interest, because we often find echoes of our characteristics and those around us in Peter. He is then truly "bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh."

Now it is not the claims that Peter made for himself that are in question here, for Peter himself exhorts us to true humility, GRACE. We see him with the Lord Jesus Christ early in His ministry and he says, "Depart from me for I am a sinful man, O Lord," Luke 5:8. And we see him as he enter Cornelius' house, lifting him to his feet saying, "Stand up, I myself also am a man," Acts 10:26.

And hear him in his more mature years, as he nears the end of his pilgrimage, when he wrote to the scattered Jewish believers in the churches of Asia Minor. 1 Peter 5:1-6, "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ (his thoughts went back to the sad day when he denied the Lord three times), and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind: Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the

elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth GRACE to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time."

So it is not with Peter's own claims that we have to deal, but with the false exaggerated claims that men of a later date made for him, because without them they could not hope to establish their own claims to supremacy and infallibility.

The Lord Jesus Christ rebuked His disciples when they were contending for the best seats in the kingdom, saying in Matthew 20:25-28, "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister: And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

The Roman Catholic Church calls Peter the prince of the apostles, and exalts him and his successors to a throne claimed to be higher than that of all secular princes. Could anything be more foreign to the mind of Christ, or to the mind of the apostle Peter? **If Peter was here on earth today, he would be the first to repudiate such claims.**

Now to support her claims for supremacy, the Roman Catholic Church appeals first to Matthew 16:17-19. And this verse appears after Peter's confession, that, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And then Jesus Christ says to Peter, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven. And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church: and the gates of hell shall not prevail

against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

The line of reasoning taken is as follows: Peter was the rock upon which the Church was to be built. To him was given the power of the keys, which meant that he alone could open the door of the kingdom of heaven. He only could bind or loose. That he became the first bishop of Rome, and thereby marked out that city as the center of ecclesiastical and spiritual government for all other churches everywhere. And finally, that by an uninterrupted succession, all the authority given to Peter was passed on in a long line of bishops and Popes, all of them Christ's vicars on earth, right down to the present day.

In this section of our study we will take up these related arguments, one by one, as far as they refer to the apostle Peter. The so-called succession of bishops or Popes will be taken up separately later in our study.

1. IT IS CLAIMED THAT PETER WAS THE ROCK ON WHICH THE CHURCH WAS TO BE BUILT.

There is a play on words on the word "Peter" and the word "rock." They both come from the same Greek word, but they differ. The one word, "PETROS," which is the word from which Peter is taken means a loose piece of rock, such as one man could throw to another. The other word, "PETRA," means a fixed permanent rock. "Thou art Peter, PETROS, a piece of rock, and on this rock, PETRA, a fixed permanent rock, I will build My Church."

Peter was anything but a fixed, permanent rock, and certainly a poor foundation for any building. Almost immediately after receiving the Lord's commendation, he has to be rebuked with a severeness which startles him, because he said, "Be it far from Thee, Lord," when Jesus Christ spoke of His coming suffering and death on the cross. And the Lord rebuked him by saying, "Get thee behind Me Satan. Thou art an offense unto Me, for thou savorest not the things that be of

God. but those that be of men," Matthew 16:23.

Only 16 out of the 84 early Church fathers believed that the Word referred to Peter when He said, "this rock." The other holding variously that it applied to Christ or to Peter's testimony to Christ, or to all the apostles. So, if appeal is made to the early Church fathers of the first four centuries, Rome's claim must be disallowed. It is quite impossible to believe that God would permit such a basic doctrine as this, if it were indeed His Truth, to sink into obscurity and uncertainty for so long a time, only to be rediscovered by leaders of the Roman Catholic Church, when they were struggling to assert their authority centuries later.

Let us see if God the Holy Spirit throws any light on this subject in the Word of God. When the Jews of Jesus Christ's day rejected His claim to Messiahship, Christ said unto them, "Did ye never read in the Scriptures, the Stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the Head of the corner, this is the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes," Matthew 21:42.

Peter, when asked by the same Jewish rulers by what power and in what name he had cured the lame man at the beautiful gate of the temple, he said, "By the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the Stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other Name under heaven given unto men, whereby we must be saved," Acts 4:10-12.

The apostle Peter repeats the same thought in his epistle. "Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, behold, I lay in Zion a chief Corner Stone, elect, precious, and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded," 1 Peter 2:6. It is Peter himself and none other who thus points to the Lord Jesus Christ as the Rock Foundation. No suggestion of himself appears.

The apostle Paul writing to the church at Ephesus says, "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace. Who hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us: Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace: And that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God: and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Corner Stone: In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord. In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit," Ephesians 2:13-22.

Here we have Christ the chief Corner Stone. But we have something else here, a secondary foundation, which is very nearly what Rome says. For on page 149 of *"The Question Box,"* she says, "Christ was the Divine foundation of the Church, its rock primarily, Peter was the rock secondarily by Divine appointment." But that is not what this Ephesian chapter says. "Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets." Peter is included, of course, but he is only one of a group, and all the apostles and all the prophets are there too. He and the apostles and the prophets together are the secondary foundation, **NOT PETER ALONE.**

2. There is a second claim that the Roman Catholic Church makes for Peter, from the message in Matthew 16:17-19. TO HIM WERE GIVEN THE KEYS TO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

Now, that is quite true. And he has used them well, because on the Day of Pentecost, it was his privilege to open the door of the kingdom to the vast multitudes of Jews and

proselytes gathered at Jerusalem for the feast, when 3000 souls entered in and received the gift of the Holy Spirit as the seal of their forgiveness. Ephesians 1:13, "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the Word of Truth, the Gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise."

After the door was once opened, it did not need opening again. Then at Caesarea, Peter, the apostle to the Jews as he primarily was, as per Galatians 2:8, had the second privilege of unlocking the doors of faith in the Gentile world, when Cornelius and the other Gentiles with him, believing, were saved and received the gift of the Holy Spirit. That door also does not need opening a second time.

Incidentally, Peter, with his Jewish upbringing and prejudices, seems to have been very reluctant to open this second door. This is why, even after his great confession at Caesarea, Philippi, he attempted to argue with God saying, "Not so Lord." For a second time he received a rebuke for his forwardness. And he was told in Acts 10:1-15, "What God hath cleansed, that call thou not common." The Lord said to Peter, I will give unto thee the keys. There were two doors, and Peter opened them both. Is that mere coincidence?

3. THE THIRD CLAIM THAT IS MADE FOR THE APOSTLE PETER IS HIS POWER TO BIND AND TO LOOSE.

"Whatsoever thou shalt bind on Earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven," Matthew 16:19. Quite right. But Peter can only do that on Divinely appointed conditions. These conditions are laid down by the Lord Jesus Christ. "Now after this John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the Gospel," Mark 1:14, 15.

Repentance and faith in Christ; these are two **UNCHANGABLE CONDITIONS** on which forgiveness is offered to the sinner and received by him. They were laid down by the

Lord Jesus Christ, they were preached and **INSISTED** upon by the apostle Peter. Acts 2:38, "Then Peter said unto them, repent, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." Acts 3:19, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." Acts 10:43, "To him give all the prophets witness, that through His Name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." **THOSE CONDITIONS FOR FORGIVENESS STILL STAND.**

REPENT, CHANGE YOUR MIND ABOUT CHRIST, AND BELIEVE IN HIM AS YOUR PERSONAL SAVIOUR GIVES YOU ETERNAL LIFE. God the Holy Spirit convicts and convinces the unbeliever of unbelief in Christ, and when the unbeliever changes his mind about Christ and accepts Him as his personal Saviour, he has everlasting life. So, that any believer can loose or bind simply by giving the Gospel to the unbeliever, and their reaction to the Gospel results in eternal life or eternal torment.

Now there are two other places where the Lord Jesus Christ used the same words concerning binding and loosing. One is in Matthew 18:15-18, where when speaking to His disciples He said, "Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

This passage deals primarily with an offending brother, but the principle of forgiveness is the same, with the addition, however, that the Lord's words were not addressed to Peter only, but to all the apostles. Moreover, the congregation of the church was also to share in the authority to bind or to loose. The

ground of authority given here is not the presence of Peter or other apostles in the group, but because of Christ being there. "For where two or three are gathered in My Name, there am I in the midst of them," Matthew 18:20.

The other passage is John 20:21-23, which is after the resurrection. Roman Catholics claim that this is the occasion when authority to bind and loose was not merely promised but actually bestowed upon Peter. But on this occasion also the words were not addressed to Peter only but to all the apostles. By comparing the record of John with the parallel account in Luke 24:33-48, we find that the two from Emmaus were present as well, for it was while they were yet speaking that the Lord Jesus Christ stood in their midst and showed them the wounded prints, as in John's account. So to Cleopas and his companion, also the same authority was given. Peter received it, yes, but so did the apostles, and the two from Emmaus, and in the days that have come, the Church also.

John 20:21-23, "Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."

Further Rome claims purely on the ground of her interpretation of the Scriptures being binding upon everyone, that the authority given to Peter is to be understood as the power of forgiving and retaining sins in the sacrament of penance.

The Council of Trent declares: "Whosoever shall affirm that the words of our Lord and Saviour, 'receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven, whose sins ye retain, they are retained,' are not to be understood of the power of forgiving and retaining sins in the sacrament of penance, as the Catholic Church has always from the first understood, **BUT SHALL RESTRICT THEM TO THE AUTHORITY OF PREACHING THE GOSPEL IN OPPOSITION TO THE INSTITU-**

TION OF THIS SACRAMENT, LET HIM BE ACCURSED,” Council of Trent, XIV Session.

Protestant Christians believe and maintain that what the Council of Trent pronounces an anathema against is indeed the Truth of God with the plain teaching of the Holy Scriptures behind it. They do not fear the anathema of Rome because “the curse that is causeless, lighteth not,” Proverbs 26:2. 2 Samuel 16:12, “It may be that the Lord will look on mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for His cursing this day.”

Not once in the record of the Acts of the apostles or the epistles does Peter or any other apostle utter his “ABSOLVO TE,” as claimed by Rome, but always and only as a part of the content of the Gospel they teach.

Acts 13:38, 39, “Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins. And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”

Rome quotes these three Scriptures to bolster up her claims for the primacy of Peter over the other apostles. The first is Matthew 16:18, 19, which we have already considered. The second is Luke 22:31, 32, “And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.” The third is John 21:15-17, with its thrice repeated question, “Lovest thou Me?” and thrice repeated, “Feed My sheep.”

Protestants everywhere absolutely deny that on any of these occasions the Lord either promised or bestowed the primacy on Peter. It is not necessary to repeat what has been said concerning Matthew 16. In Luke 22:31, 32 the Lord prayed especially for Peter, not because of any new responsibility to be put upon him, but because He foresaw the attack and defeat because of self-confidence, for Peter had said, “Though all should deny Thee, yet will not I.” Jesus Christ saw that in the GRACE of God Peter’s fall and his

experience of Christ’s forgiving love could be overruled to make him the better able to strengthen others in temptation.

In John 21:15-17 the Lord’s question searched Peter three times, because three times he had denied the Lord Jesus Christ. So the Lord’s three-fold “Feed My sheep” is not to establish him in the primacy. The whole setting of the context of that scene is against that. It is merely to reinstate him, that Peter and others might know with certainty that in spite of his failure, he was not cast off by the Lord, but will be still used in His service when restored back to fellowship with the Lord. **This is a very different thing from making Him head of the Church and prince of the apostles.**

Rome’s forced interpretation of these Scriptures, backed by anathemas on those who refuse to accept her view, only goes to show how hard up she is to find any Scriptural support for her claim, without which she is thrown back entirely on Papal decrees and Council decisions. While Peter’s name repeatedly heads the list of the apostles, **nowhere is it said in Scripture that he was given any superior position, either in office or authority.** His impetuous nature and gift of ready speech and action inevitably brought him into prominence, but often into trouble as well.

There are also many other indications in Scripture that Peter never held the position of prince of the apostles. For instance in Acts 8:14 we read that the apostles sent Peter and John to Samaria, showing that Peter was just one of them. They sent and Peter went. Our Lord said, “The servant is not greater than his lord, neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him,” John 13:16.

After returning from Caesarea to Jerusalem Peter was charged by some in the Church with improper action in visiting and eating with uncircumcized men. Peter did not rebuke them as he might have done, had he been a prince among them, and head of the Church. Instead he modestly and meekly explained the circumstances. Acts 11:1-18.

When certain Jewish believers went to Antioch and stirred up dissension, the whole Church delegated Paul and Barnabas, with other brethren, to go to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders. They did not send them up to Peter, as they would have done had he been head of the Church. A decision was reached by the whole Church, **not by Peter**, though he did take part in the discussion. The letters were not sent in his name, but in the names of the apostles and elder brethren, and carried by men chosen not by Peter, but by the Church, Acts 15:1-29.

Peter wrote two epistles, but in neither of them does he suggest that he stood in a position of supreme authority. He calls himself an elder, and he addresses fellow elders. He lays on them no command, but in his second epistle he writes, "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you, in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance. That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles," note the plural "apostles," "of the Lord and Saviour," 2 Peter 3:1, 2. Paul was regarded as a sectarian, one who brings division in the Church, anyone who said he was "of Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas,"

Peter, or attached himself to any human name, 1 Corinthians 1:12.

In 2 Corinthians 11:5, Paul says, "For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles." **If Peter was indeed the official head of the Church, we may be quite sure Paul would never have so written under Divine inspiration.**

The effect of the Scriptures quoted against the Romish doctrine of the primacy of the apostle Peter and all the errors arising from that claim is cumulative and **cannot be overthrown.**

Christ is the Rock foundation, on which the Church is built, AND NOT PETER. Christ is the one and only Head of the Church. Christ alone, by right of His atoning blood on the cross, can forgive sin. To Peter, as God's instrument, was given the privilege of opening the door of faith to both Jew and Gentile. **Peter was NEVER GIVEN, nor did he ever occupy any position of rulership over the other apostles.**

"One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren," Matthew 23:8.

"There is no foundation that any man can lay than that which is laid, Christ Jesus the Lord."

THE PAPAL SUCCESSION

The basic claim of Rome concerning Peter's supremacy is overthrown not by human reasoning which is weak at best, but by the statements of the Word of God. And because of this, and the inescapable logic of historical fact, it seems almost superfluous to examine the superstructure of Papal supremacy built upon the claims for Peter.

Yet since this is that very superstructure which has loomed so large in years gone by, and still maintains its influence upon millions and millions of souls in the world today, it is necessary to examine also the claims of Papal succession.

The Roman Catholic Church claims that the apostle Peter was the first bishop of Rome and thereby the first Pope. What support is there for this in the Word of God, the Bible? **NONE WHATEVER.** There is one verse to which Rome points, but its application depends solely on **her** interpretation of its meaning. 1 Peter 5:13, "The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you and doth Marcus my son." "Babylon," says Rome, stands for pagan Rome, that is what the holy mother church says. And since she claims infallibility in her interpretation of the Scriptures, the claim is proved so far as she is concerned, since Peter sent greetings in his letter from the church at Babylon.

First of all, the word "church" in that verse does not appear. It is in italics and the literal translation is as follows: "They that are elected with you at Babylon saluteth you and Marcus my son." That Scriptural "proof" may be completely satisfactory to the Roman hierarchy, but it does not satisfy those who do not accept the infallibility of Rome's teaching. And it is curious that this epistle of Peter is the only one of all the New Testament epistles where the place of writing has to be something other than that plainly stated.

Even if we grant, for argument's sake, that at the time Peter wrote his epistle, he was actually in Rome, there is still no proof

from Scripture that he was there as resident bishop or Pope. We have a full, not complete, record of his movements in the first part of the book of Acts, but after chapter 15, he is not once more mentioned. The later chapters are, of course, the record of the progress of the Gospel in the Gentile world, while Peter was the apostle to the Jews, so his absence from the study need cause no great surprise.

But if, as Rome claims, he was bishop, and Pope of Rome, then it is indeed remarkable that his name should not once be mentioned again in Luke's record, especially as that record closes in Rome itself.

Rome, however, falls back upon tradition, quoting a number of references to Peter's labor and martyrdom there. There is one tradition about his going to Rome in A.D. 42 to be bishop there for 25 years, but that is impossible to believe on the evidence of many scholars, some of whom were themselves Roman Catholic.

According to the New Testament, Peter was in prison just before Herod's death, which is usually placed about A.D. 44, Acts 12:1-16. Nine years later he was present at the council in Jerusalem, Acts 15:7. Now long after this Paul resisted him at Antioch, because he withdrew from fellowship with Gentile believers, Galatians 2:11-16.

Moreover had Peter been in Rome, it is exceedingly unlike that Paul would have written to the church in that city as he did. See Romans 1:5, 6 and 1:13-16. Nor would he have felt so strong an urge to go there himself. Romans 1:9-12. For it would have been contrary to his own independent line of action and whole pattern of work which was "not to build on another man's foundation." Romans 15:20, "Yea, so have I strived to preach the Gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation." 2 Corinthians 10:16, "To preach the Gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast

in another man's line of things made ready to our hand."

When Paul wrote to the church at Rome in A.D. 58 Peter evidently was not there, for Paul makes no reference to him, though he spoke of his longing to see the believers that he might impart to them some spiritual gift. Romans 1:11, "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established." Again in Romans 16 Paul makes mention of 27 Christian disciples by name. If Peter were there, could he have missed him out of the list? And when Paul did arrive in Rome, some of the brethren went to meet him. If Peter were among them, would not Luke have recorded the fact? If, as claimed by Rome, Peter had already been there over 18 years, would not the Jewish community at Rome have known much more about Christianity than they evidently did?

Acts 28:17-22, "And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. Who, when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me. But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Caesar: not that I had ought to accuse my nation of. For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain. And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee. But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against."

Further, while at Rome, Paul wrote letters to the churches at Philippi, Colosse, and Ephesus, and also to Philemon. In these letters he mentions the names of many who were there, who labored with him in the Gospel, but makes no mention of Peter.

Philippians 4:21, 22, "Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me greet you. All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household." Colossians 4:10-14, "Aristarchus my fellow-prisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;) And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my fellowworkers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort to me. Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis. Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you." Philemon 23, 24, "There salute thee Epaphras, my fellowprisoner in Christ Jesus: Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers."

After some years Paul was imprisoned in Rome a second time. When writing to Timothy during this second imprisonment he says, "Only Luke is with me," 2 Timothy 4:11. And again "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me," 2 Timothy 4:16.

If Peter had been there, he would not have forsaken Paul. It is evident therefore that during those years Peter was not at Rome. **How then could he have held the office of bishop of Rome?**

Rome sweeps away this evidence with her usual dogmatism. Official pronouncements have been made by a Pope about the finding of Peter's headless skeleton beneath the famous Basilica in Rome, **but the report issued to the British United Press by the Vatican official admits that scholars claim no definite proof as to whose bones they were.** According to John 21:18, 19, and early Church tradition, **Peter was crucified, and NOT BEHEADED.**

In answer to the question, "What proofs can you give that St. Peter was ever bishop of Rome?" she says in "*The Question Box*," page 145, "It was not Divinely revealed that St. Peter was bishop of Rome, but it is a

dogmatic fact, i.e., an historical truth so certain and so intimately connected with the dogma of primacy, that it comes under the Divine infallible teaching authority of the Church. The Vatican Council defined it as an article of faith that St. Peter still lives, presides, and judges in the person of his successors, the bishops of Rome."

So, now, notwithstanding, admitted absence of Divine revelation, Peter, by Papal definition, was bishop of Rome, and moreover, still lives, presides and judges in the person of his successors, the bishops of Rome.

Let's look at this line of succession, and successors, described elsewhere as "unbroken." With such a claim we would naturally expect a line of successors whose titles were so clear and certain as to be indisputable, with no possibility of doubt concerning any one of them, since **the strength of a chain is the strength of its weakest link.**

Since there were many occasions in history when there were rival claimants to the throne of St. Peter, **there are varying lists of Popes.** The "*Catholic Encyclopedia*" contains a list of **259 Popes**, with Peter as the first, Linus (cf 2 Timothy 4:21) as the second, and Clement (Philippians 4:3) as the fourth. The first 11 names covering Peter's death to A.D. 165 are all marked with an interrogation point, **indicating that there is lack of historical certainty.** Surely there should be no uncertainty concerning the incumbents of such an office as vicar of Christ and head of the Church (cf Luke 20:2, "And spake unto him, saying, Tell us, by what authority doest thou these things? or who is he that gave thee this authority?") **Where is the "unbroken succession?"**

The register of the next 1000 years contains numerous gaps, **with occasion when there were two and sometimes even three rival Popes, each claiming authority and striving for the mastery.** Twenty-nine of the list are marked as "pretenders." There was one period when false Popes usurped the Papal throne for 40 years, during which the

greatest number of the countries of Europe rallied themselves behind one or the other, while the Church Council dared not decide for either. A final solution to the problem was only arrived at by setting both claimants aside and appointing an entirely new Pope. So much for the "unbroken succession" through which Rome claims her authority today.

Consider some of the well authenticated characters of some of these successors. **Pope John XI was the illegitimate son of Pope Sergius III by an infamously wicked woman named Marozia. John XII, a nephew of John XI, was a monster of wickedness,** who through the influence of the dominant Tuscan Party in Rome was raised to Popedom at the age of 18. **His tyrannies and debaucheries were such that, upon the complaint of the people of Rome, the Emperor Orho tried and deposed him.** Some of the sins enumerated in the charge were **murder, perjury, sacrilege, and incest.** When called to answer the charges, Pope John replied as follows: "John, the servant of the servants of God, to all bishops. We hear that you want to make another Pope. If that is your design, I excommunicate you all in the name of the Almighty, that you may not have it in your power to ordain any other, or even to celebrate mass."

Regardless of the threat, the Emperor and Council deposed "this monster without one single virtue to atone for his many vices," as he was called by the bishops in Council. Cardinal Baronius, one of the most powerful champions of Popery, in reference to these happenings, writes, "O, what was then the face of the Holy Roman Church, how filthy, when the vilest and most powerful prostitutes ruled in the court of Rome by whose arbitrary way, dioceses were made and unmade, bishops were consecrated, and which is inexpressibly horrible to be mentioned... false Popes, their paramours, were thrust into the chair of St. Peter."

Why after the lapse of some hundreds of years, do we drag all these unsavory happenings into the light? Would it not be more Christian to bury them in the oblivion they de-

serve? **The point is that the name of John XII still reckons in the regular line of Popes, through whom the unbroken chain of apostolic authority descends upon the Pope of today.**

Listen to this extract from the *Council of Trent Catechism*. "Seeing the bishops and priests are, as it were, the interpreters and ambassadors of God, who, in God's name teach men the Divine law and rules of life, and personate God himself on earth, it is evident therefore that their function is such as a greater cannot be conceived. They hold the power of the name of the immortal God among us." Taken from the *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, page 120. In view of the in-

iquitous lives of such men as these, and others who might be mentioned, **could there be greater blasphemy against the Lord than to say that they "personate God on earth, and hold the power of the immortal God among us?"** Yet to such depths the Romish Church of Papal apostolic succession leads us.

If they impersonate God on earth to us, **then that would make God a murderer, and a perjurer, and involved in incest. Ambassadors of God?** Whose ambassadors are they really? **If they have never accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour, then the Lord Jesus Christ says, "their father is the devil."**

THE ONE TRUE CHURCH

I believe in the holy Catholic Church. This clause in the "Apostle's Creed" is subscribed to by Protestant and Catholic alike, heartily and without reservation. The term "holy Catholic Church" is NOT found in the Scriptures. Neither is the statement in the creed that "God the Father is the Creator," because Scripture tells us that Jesus Christ is the Creator. But when saying the Apostles Creed, the claim implied in the name is soundly Scriptural.

All Christians agree that the first reference to it is made by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself in Matthew 10:18, "Upon this rock I will build My Church and the gates if hell shall not prevail against it." Christ is the builder, "I will build." It is His Church, "My Church." He is the Rock foundation, "Upon this rock." Even Roman Catholics acknowledge that the "Rock" refers primarily to Christ, though claiming that Peter is the rock foundation in a secondary sense, which Protestants will not admit if the claim is made for Peter only as distinct from the other apostles.

Therefore, the word "Church" is used in two senses, first in reference to the Church universal, and in many places in reference to a local church or churches, the context generally deciding which is meant.

For instance, in Matthew 18:17 the clause "Tell it unto the church," after the passing of the Church's infancy period, could refer only to the local community of Christians, since the matter of requiring attention, a difficulty arising between two Christians, was essentially local. The great persecution which arose after Stephen's death fell first upon the Church at Jerusalem, Acts 8:1, but later we find Paul, now preaching the faith he once destroyed, "confirming the churches" through Syria and Cilicia. As the Gospel advances, churches are gathered out in many places in many lands, and are referred to individually as the "Church of God" in such and such a place, and collectively as "churches"

as in Romans 16:16, "The churches of Christ salute you."

But the local churches do not cease to be parts of the one true Church, because they are geographically separated from one another. As we shall see, however, the holy Catholic Church, the Church universal, is not merely the sum total of all the local churches. It is more and it is less, for it includes some who, like the dying thief, were never received into the membership of the visible Church on Earth, while too many others within the visible Church were never true believers at all.

Let us turn to passages in the New Testament, which obviously refer to the Church universal, even when the word "Church" is not used, putting them down just as they appear in Scripture:

Romans 12:3-5, "For I say, through the GRACE given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think: but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."

1 Corinthians 12:4-6, "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all."

1 Corinthians 12:12, 13, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free: and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

1 Corinthians 12:27-31, "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the Church, first

apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way."

Ephesians 1:22, 23, "God hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, Which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all."

Ephesians 2:13-22, "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us: Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God: And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Cornerstone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

There are other passages that might be added, but let this suffice as a Divinely inspired New Testament picture of the holy Catholic Church, in which, as stated in the Apostles Creed, we believe, and to which we as individual believers in Christ thankfully belong. Called by His Gospel, and having put our faith in Him, we received the Lord Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour according to the Scriptures. "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the

sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name. Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," John 1:12, 13.

Now on believing we are sealed with God the Holy Spirit individually, who is the earnest, the down payment, of our inheritance, Ephesians 1:13, 14. By the same Spirit we have been baptized into the Body of Christ, His universal Church. And with all other true believers made fellowmembers of that one body of which Jesus Christ is the Head. 1 Corinthians 12:12, 13. It is a family, "the household of faith," in heaven and on Earth, the Church triumphant as well as the Church militant, all distinctions of race and nationality, previous religion and social standing, swallowed up in the new heavenly relationship.

Does the Roman Catholic Church of history, as we know it today in the world resemble the picture of the one true Church of God presented to us in the New Testament? Its hierarchy of Popes, and cardinals, archbishops, and bishops, priests and monks and nuns. Its striving after spiritual and temporal domination, its lust for earthly wealth and glory, its perversions of doctrine, its superstitions and all too frequent gross and shameful immoralities. These things make us ask whether it corresponds in any point with the Church of the New Testament. To ask the question is to answer it, for an affirmative reply is unthinkable. Yet Rome today still claims to be the true and only holy Catholic Church, outside of which they say, there is no salvation.

What is the history of this strange and awful phenomenon, a church with such a character, making such claims? Volumes have been written, and indeed have been written on this subject. It is only possible in our brief study to point out some of its silent features.

The Church of Rome can probably trace its beginning, with a number of other churches, to the Day of Pentecost, when on that birthday of the Church, there were "strangers from Rome, Jews and proselytes," Acts 2:10, in the crowd which listened to Pe-

ter's message. It is possible and indeed probable that among those strangers from Rome were some who that day turned to the Lord Jesus Christ and found their place among the 3000 who were baptized.

Our earliest positive information is found in Paul's epistle to the Church at Rome. His writing of such an important treatise as this epistle to the Christians at Rome indicates what a large place they had in his thoughts, and indeed he says so. He speaks of them as "beloved of God" and says that their faith was "spoken of throughout the whole world." Romans 1:8. And he thanks God on their behalf, although at the time of writing the epistle he had never visited Rome. Yet he mentions some 25 of their number by name, and some of them he knows intimately. He had evidently met them elsewhere.

The Church was not perfect, hence his desire to go to them, that he might impart to them some spiritual gift that they might be established. Romans 1:8-12, "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the Gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers: Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established: That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me."

They needed warning against spiritual pride. Romans 12:3, "For I say, through the GRACE given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think: but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." In view of later developments, how necessary this warning was. He exhorted them to be kindly affectioned one to another, in honor preferring one another, to be patient in tribulation, to continue instant in prayer, and so forth. But on the whole, they were evidently good believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

When some years later Paul arrived as a prisoner in Rome, a party of these Christians traversed the 30-odd miles to the three taverns to welcome him. "Whom when Paul saw, he thanked God and took courage," Acts 28:15.

Still later, certain of the brethren, doubtless moved by his courage in adversity, became more zealous to teach the Gospel. They did it out of love. But there was another side to the picture, for there were others, at least professing Christians, who also preached the Gospel with increased zeal, but their motives were all wrong, for they wanted to take advantage of Paul's forced incapacity because of imprisonment to increase their own influence in the Church, and acted with deliberate intent to "add affliction to his bonds," Philippians 1:15, 16. If they were Christians, they certainly were not Christ-like.

Even in the early stage of Church history there were false brethren who had crept into the fellowship of the believers. Jerusalem had its Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5:1-11, and Samaria its Simon Magus, whose heart was not right in the sight of God, so that He had no part nor lot in the true Catholic Church. Acts 8:21, "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God."

The apostle John also writes of some. "They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us; they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not of us," 1 John 2:19.

It need not surprise us therefore to find the same thing in the Church of Rome. Paul writes to Timothy, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world," 2 Timothy 4:10. He had been Paul's fellow worker, Philemon 24, but at the last had proved false.

For the later history of the Roman Church we have to look elsewhere, and then information is fragmentary. In post-apostolic days there were three patriarchates, Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch. Each was independent of the others, but when acting together, Rome took the precedence, because

it was situated at the seat of secular government. When wealthy and influential people were drawn into the Church, among them the Emperor Constantine himself, the prestige of the Roman Church was still further enhanced. Its wealth was freely used to help the needy and oppressed elsewhere. Its theology at the time for the most part was orthodox, and contending parties in other churches sought its help in disputes, and in time Rome's decisions came to be regarded, not just as arbitration awards, but as having the force of law.

The word "Pope" as distinctive title of the Bishop of Rome emerged in the fifth century by overthrowing the civil institutions served to enhance the influence of the Roman see. When in 476 the Emperor transferred his seat to Constantinople, the Pope became the chief figure in western Europe. Gregory I, 590-604 A.D., was notable for his missionary enterprise and especially for his mission to England.

By the close of the eighth century the Pope had asserted his right to dispense with the observance of canonical law. He had assumed the prerogatives of a universal metropolitan, and made it a rule of the western Church that in all matters of importance, appeal be made to Rome.

At the Council of Florence in 1439 the superiority of the Pope over any general council was definitely promulgated and it has never been challenged by any council. In the Vatican Council of 1870, in spite of strong protest, not only was the absolute authority of Popes over the councils confirmed, but the new doctrine of "Papal Infallibility" was ratified, rendering it superfluous for a general council ever to be summoned again.

So we have traced the pages of history, the process by which the Church at Rome of Paul's day developed, but it HASN'T developed, for all her wealth, and power and worldly glory, it has degenerated into the Roman Catholic Church of today, the very negation of God's thought for the Holy Catholic Church revealed in the New Testament.

We are reminded of our Lord's parable about the mustard seed. "Another parable put He forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it has grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof," Matthew 13:31, 32. Many and evil are the birds of the air which have lodged in the spreading branches of the herb become tree Church of Rome.

TEMPORAL AUTHORITY

We have traced in our study the process by which the Church at Rome was changed from a local church of true apostolic origin and faith into the Church of Rome, claiming absolute spiritual authority, not over only all individual souls, but also over all other churches, wherever found. But Rome's claim goes beyond this. She not only claims spiritual authority, but temporal authority also.

The "keys of Peter," one gold and one silver, represent to Rome spiritual and secular supremacy. The two swords which Peter produced in the garden at Gethsemane, and of which, according to Roman interpretation, the Lord said, "It is enough," Luke 22:38, represents to them the same two-fold authority. These arbitrarily interpreted passages are the only two in the whole compass of Scripture which Rome can lay hold upon in support of her claim to temporal power. Spiritual authority is higher than secular authority, and since they teach that the Pope holds both by virtue of being Peter's successor, all earthly thrones must be under his control.

To quote from "*The Question Box*:" "The Church is indeed a spiritual kingdom, established solely for the salvation of mankind. The temporal power of the Popes, which lasted for centuries, was not at all necessary for their spiritual power, because it persists of its own Divine right." "Catholics have always maintained that to carry on effectively their supreme worldwide jurisdiction as vicars of Christ, the Popes ought not to be subject to any secular prince. As Pius IX declared in 1849, 'Peoples, kings, and all nations would never turn with full confidence and devotion to the Bishop of Rome, if they saw him the subject of a sovereign or government, and did not know him to be in possession of full liberty'," page 165.

The argument of "necessity" for temporal power in any form is utterly fallacious and contrary to the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ and the whole New Testament. Our Lord Himself declared all dependence upon the secular arm when He said to Peter, "Put up again thy sword into his place, for all they

that take the sword shall perish with the sword," Matthew 26:52. And again the Lord said to Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is My kingdom not from hence," John 18:36.

Far from wielding temporal power, Christians are exhorted to submit themselves to the secular authorities, and Peter himself, under the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit commands it. "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme: Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them to do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men," 1 Peter 2:13-15.

The apostle Paul was equally emphatic in his teaching. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid: for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due: custom to whom custom: fear to whom fear: honour to whom honour," Romans 13:1-7.

And again we read in Titus 3:1, "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work." It is obvious that the

“higher powers” referred to are secular powers, for they are defined as “the king,” whom Peter says is supreme, not the Pope, as Peter was supposed to be, though the name did not come into use until hundreds of years later, and “governors” carrying his delegated authority.

The “kings and governors” are God’s appointees to rule in the secular realm, and he who resists them resists the ordinance of God. In the same way, elders or bishops, as they are often called in Scripture, both having the same office, are God’s appointees in the spiritual realm, as the apostle Peter says in his epistle. “The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind: Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock,” 1 Peter 5:1-3.

What they exhorted others to do, they were first to do themselves. They themselves were to be subject to the secular authorities, as an ensample to other believers over whom God had made them overseers. History tells us how completely the Roman Church failed in this very thing, not as a matter of accident, but by deliberate policy. The historian Hume, writing of conditions occurring in England in the days of Thomas A. Becket, says, “The ecclesiastics in that age had renounced all immediate subordination to the magistrate. They openly pretended to an exemption, in criminal accusations, from a trial before the courts of justice, and were gradually introducing a like exemption in civil causes.

In his book, *“The Pontificate of Pius IX,”* published in 1851, Nicolini writes, “In criminal matters, the civil judge has no jurisdiction whatever over any person connected with directly or indirectly with the Church. The very servants of a bishop, prelate, or cardinal, and even their servants’ wives are not amenable to the lay tribunals. They may insult, rob, and murder, but no one except the Bishop has power to punish them.”

This applied to the papal states in Italy before they were freed from the yoke of Rome. To go back to the beginning, Rome’s assumption of temporal authority ran parallel with her usurpation of spiritual authority for the circumstances which ministered to her growing pride and strength were the same. Her declining spiritual life and increasing political prestige and wealth under Constantine’s patronage, the break down of civil government under the barbaric invasions of the fifth century, and the removal of the imperial throne to Constantinople, leaving the city of Rome without strong civil authority, all played into the hands of the men who knew how to asset the Church’s authority, and made the most of their opportunities.

By the end of the eighth century, the Pope conferred upon ecclesiastical foundations privileges which enabled them to encroach upon the secular jurisdiction. Nicholas I, 851-867, by aid of the notorious forged decretals, which were supposed to go back to the time of Clement, 91-100 A.D., successfully asserted the subjection of the secular powers to the Church.

Gregory VII, 1073-1085, commonly known as Hildebrand, made it his settled purpose to raise himself absolutely above the secular authority, and make the papal throne the undisputed master of the world. In his great conflict with the Emperor Henry IV of Germany, Hildebrand gained a notable victory when he placed the Emperor under an interdict. Excommunicated and dethroned, with his subjects forbidden to yield him obedience, he was obliged to lay aside his kingly dignity, cross the Alps into what is now Italian territory, and during the bitter winter of 1077, travel hatless and shoeless, clothed in penitential garments of coarse white cloth, to the papal palace, where he knocked at the door for three days before being allowed to enter.

The goal which Hildebrand had set before the Pontificate was finally attained by Innocent III, 1198-1226, under whom the medieval papal system reached its zenith, and the Pope was recognized as the possessor of all power on Earth in things secular as well as sacred. In a bull issued by Boniface VIII in 1302, it was declared that the sword of temporal authority could be wielded by the Mon-

arch, only at the will and permission of the Pope.

But now the tide turned, and a revolt against these pretensions soon followed. Philip of France succeeded in vindicating his independence as a sovereign. With the death of Boniface, the medieval papacy as a universal monarch virtually disappeared. However lofty the claims made, the papacy has never since made good its authority over the civil government of Europe.

Henry VIII of England broke with the Pope over the matter of Romish supremacy. No one imagines there was anything spiritual in his stand for independence, nor was there anything spiritual on the Romish side. But Henry would be master in his own home. In 1570 the Pope placed Henry's daughter, Elizabeth, under an interdict, forbidding her subjects to obey her. But like her father, Elizabeth would have none of it. She ignored the Pope and carried on her government in spite of him. The English people, including her Roman Catholic subjects, united with her in her stand against Roman domination. From the time of the Reformation, the temporal power of the papacy has declined.

Until 1870 the Pope held direct sway in the city of Rome and over what were known as the papal states in Italy. As we would expect, his rule was a complete autocracy. The people had no democratic rights, or any authority in governmental affairs. They had only such privileges as the Pope voluntarily allowed them, and these were liable to be cancelled at his will. All government was in the hands of the Church, that is, of the priesthood, and was exercised by them **for their own benefits** rather than for the good of the people. Such regulations as were necessary were established by proclamation or papal bull in the **LATIN TONGUE, WHICH WAS NOT UNDERSTOOD BY THE COMMON PEOPLE.**

Cardinals, Archbishops, and Bishops, and priests as well, constituted a privileged class. **IF ANY OF THE LOWER ORDERS DARED TO APPEAL AGAINST ANY OPPRESSIVE DECISIONS OR DARED TO READ THE PROTESTANT BIBLE, OR EVEN BOOKS OF HISTORY OF WHICH THE PAPACY DID NOT APPROVE, THEY**

WERE HAULED BEFORE CLERICAL COURTS AND TRIED AS FOR CRIMINAL OFFENSES. It is no wonder that in 1849 they rebelled and tried to overthrow the Pope. He sought safety in flight, and it was not until the following year when the Romish armies of France, Austria and Spain sent troops to reinstate him and give him the protection necessary to the resumption of government, that he was able to return. Yet after such an experience, in 1864, the Pope promulgated a number of ordinances which show that his will to reign as an absolute monarch was unchanged.

We mention three of them here:

1. The government of no country may place any limits upon the privileges and authority of the Church. Such power is invested in the Church itself (meaning the Pope), and she exercises it with or without the concurrence of the secular government.

2. Should the authority of the Church come into conflict with the authority of the secular government, then the secular government must submit to the authority of the Church.

3. The Church will exert its authority in government both directly and indirectly.

It is hardly necessary to add that, faced by such assertions of papal authority in secular affairs, the subjects of the papal states readily welcomed the King of Sardinia as ruler of the new Italy, and in 1870 he entered the city of Rome. The papal states and other adjacent territories were merged with the Kingdom of Sardinia, and became the Italy of today, with Rome as its capital. When a plebiscite was taken, 90% of the population confirmed the new regime.

Although the Pope still resided at the Vatican, his territory which had covered some 1,750 square miles and his subjects numbering about three million, all came under the control of the new king. Nevertheless, **the Roman Church still strives for temporal power**, as the ordinance of 1864 put it, "directly or indirectly."

In 1920 Mussolini seized power and made a treaty with the Vatican. The north-west corner of Rome, with an area of 108 acres on which the Vatican stood, together

with another 50 acres occupied by church buildings, a palace, and a radio station, was recognized as a sovereign state, with its own postal system, currency, daily paper, radio, and a railroad. The railroad is rarely used.

Although the smallest sovereign state in the world, the Vatican has its official representatives in many, if not most, foreign capitals, through whom, and by means also of its vast educational program in every land, **it seeks to influence the thoughts and actions of more than 300 million adherents. To most of them the Pope is not merely a spiritual head, but an absolute monarch with governmental, legislative, judicial, and executive authority all in his hands. But in his little kingdom and in the Church he governs, he is supreme, with no need to declare his purposes to others. No one, not even the cardinals, can interfere with his actions.** At his enthronement he is reminded that he is sitting on the throne of St. Peter, and is the supreme Pontiff, not of Rome only, but of all the world.

The College of Cardinals assists the Pope in his ordering of the Church. Though they fill important functions, the cardinals are still his appointees. In 1576 the Pope limited the number of cardinals to 70, but that number has seldom been reached. Theoretically there are no national barriers, but in actual fact there has always been a preponderance of Italians. Pope John XIII added a number of cardinals to the College which now exceeds the traditional number of 70.

How has Rome used the spiritual and temporal supremacy to which she has laid claims? The history of the persecution of Huss and his followers, of the inquisition in Spain and Holland, of the persecution and massacre of the Huguenots in France, and Marian martyrs in England, and many another pages stained with blood, is the answer.

In defense, where Rome cannot deny, she says that there were Protestant persecutions as well. This is true to some extent, and where it is true, Protestants freely acknowledged the wrong done, but not so Rome. **And the number of Romanists who suffer at the hand of Protestants is very small**

compared with the number of those who suffered under Roman persecutions.

In these days of democracy and religious freedom, Rome cannot persecute as once she did, but the following extract from the "*English Baptist Times*" for July 4, 1957 shows how unchanged she is in spirit. "Missionaries of the Worldwide Evangelization Crusade report that at Victoria, Caldas, Columbia, a governing elder of the congregation was administering the Lord's Supper when a priest entered, knocked the wine out of his hand, and insulted the group. Then the authorities arrived to help the priest take the evangelicals to a school, where they locked them in. When they were set free after sunset, a mob of fanatics were waiting, armed with clubs. Although beaten and bruised, they all managed to escape.

"In the country district known as Samana, all the evangelicals have been driven from their homes by the priest and his 'police force.' The priest gave the order 'not to leave one Protestant alive.' The persecutors caught up with 24-year old Belatmina Tabares Alvarez, and her broken body was found later in the waters of the Tasajo River."

These riots and murder were instigated by priests of the Roman Catholic Church. By men who with papal authority can, and in fact still do, administer the sacraments and pronounce absolution for those who confess their sins to them. **As absolute head of his Church, the Pope is responsible for these things. It cannot be pleaded that he does not know. In his position and with all his facilities, he is responsible to know what goes on.**

Not in these two last cases alone, but in many others also, Rome has proved herself through the centuries and up to this day to be the **same ruthless foe of those who refuse to bow to her dictates.** The only reason she does not now exercise the same despotism in enlightened lands like our own is that she cannot, for not only Protestants and men of the world at large, but also men and women of her own ranks, would rise up and condemn her if she attempted to usurp all political power.

PAPAL INFALLIBILITY

The Church of Rome claims that when the general Church Council or the Pope make any official pronouncement on matters of faith or morals, it is impossible for them to err, and that in them alone lies infallibility. Whatever is thus pronounced by the Pope is believed by the faithful, and whatever is commanded is to be obeyed. Surprisingly enough, the Roman Catholic tenet became an article of faith only in 1870, and that after centuries of wordy conflict, not only between Romanists and Protestants, but between Romanist and Romanist.

For several centuries before the infallibility of the Pope was decreed at the Vatican Council of 1870, the Popes had acted as though they were infallible, but against must opposition. One instance of this opposition occurred in 1682, when the French Catholic Church decided that, in spite of the Pope being the "head of the Church," and that what he promulgated was applicable to the whole Church, yet unless the General Council assented to his dictum, it was not to be received as infallible. In such a situation as this, Catholic believers were put in the impossible position of having to obey two authorities, each of which refused to acknowledge the infallible authority of the other.

Not only were Popes and Councils at loggerheads, but Pope disagreed with Pope. In the Vatican Council of 1870, note the date, over 1800 years after the beginning of Church history, the dogma of papal infallibility was forced through the Council and promulgated. The word "forced" is used because it accurately describes the facts, as witness the words of Bishop Strossmayer uttered in the Council. "History raises its voice with authority to assure us that some Popes have erred. You may protest against it, or deny it, as you please, but I will prove it." "Gregory I calls anyone 'anti-Christ' who takes the name of 'universal bishop,' and contrariwise Boniface II, 607-608, made the patricide emperor Phorcias confer the title upon him."

"Pascal II, 1088-1099, and Eugenius III, 1145-1153, authorized dueling, but Julius II, 1509, and Pius IV, 1569, forbade it." "Eugenius IV, 1431-1439, approved of the Council of Basle, and in the restitution of the chalice to the Church of Bohemia. Pius II, 1458, revoked the concession." "Hadrian II, 867-872, declared civil marriages to be valid. Pius VII, 1800-1823, condemned it." "Sixtus V, 1585-1590, purchased an edition of the Bible and by a full recommendation to be read, Pius VII, 1800-1823, condemned the reading of it." "Clement XIV, 1700-1721, abolished the Order of the Jesuits, permitted by Paul III, and Pius VII re-established it."

"If you then proclaim the infallibility of the actual Pope, Pius IX, you must either prove that which is impossible, that the Popes never contradicted each other, or you must declare that the Holy Spirit has revealed to you that the infallibility of the papacy only dates from 1870. Are you bold enough to do that?"

"I say, if you decree the infallibility of the present Bishop of Rome, you must establish the infallibility of all the preceding ones without excluding any, but can you do that when history is there establishing with clearness equal to the sun that the Popes have erred in their teaching? **Could you do it and maintain that avaricious, incestuous, murdering, simoniacal Popes have been vicars of Jesus Christ?** Believe me, history cannot be made over again. It is there, and will remain to all eternity, to protest energetically against the dogma of papal infallibility."

Now in spite of all the protests raised, the Council declared for infallibility. But how did the voting go? At the first voting, 418 votes were cast in favor of infallibility, and 146 against, while some present refrained from voting. After further discussion extending over several months, another vote was taken, as a result of which 534 were for papal infallibility, with only two against, while 105 did not vote. A few of these latter were

absent through sickness, but the great majority refused to attend. As a last step, the two dissident voters submitted to the will of the majority, and the dogma of papal infallibility was promulgated.

Many of the theologians and professors in Germany, Switzerland and Austria resisted the decision, however, and in the following years, 1871, broke away to form a new organization which was called the Old Catholic Church. So the battle was over. Political disorders attending the establishment of the new kingdom of Italy prevented the continuance of the Vatican Council, which scattered without formerly closing its proceedings, and no general Church Council has since been convened. **The Pope, a self-immolated prisoner in the Vatican, being left in his palace, shorn of his territories, but holding in his grasp for himself and his successors the spoil of papal infallibility as his sole prerogative.**

When a Pope dies and another has to be appointed, it is done by a series of ballots, beginning with a number of nominations, and the voting being done by the College of Cardinals, **all of them fallible men.** The new Pope need not be or have been appointed. During the election, the cardinals are not permitted to exchange information or opinions, and the ballot goes on day after day until the requisite number is cast for one candidate. At last, other names are eliminated from the confusion of conflicting opinions, and one name stands out. **That man, himself as fallible as the rest, is then consecrated by all the other fallible members of the College, and by the act of consecration receives the gift of infallibility.**

As Bishop Strossmayer pointed out, the Popes became infallible in 1870, **by a special revelation, and not before, or else the dogma of papal infallibility is retroactive, and covered all the previous Popes, including those whose vices and crimes make their names a blot on papal history.** Apparently Rome accepts the latter alternative, for she claims that she never has introduced any new doctrine. And so, in spite of all the obloquy and contradictions involved,

all the Popes from the beginning have been infallible.

Rome struggles to cover herself by saying, "Infallibility, freedom from error in declaring to the world the Gospel of Christ, and impeccability, freedom from sin, **are two totally different things.** While we naturally **expect the Popes to be of the higher moral character, and most of them have been, the official prerogative of infallibility has nothing whatever to do with the Pope's personal goodness or wickedness.**

It is true that in the latter half of the 19th century certain Catholic writers tried to white-wash Alexander VI vis Bernacchi, Chantrel Leonetti, Nemeo, Ollivier, and others. But it is not fair to style them dishonest, for a Catholic naturally feels bound to defend his mother's good name. Call them unscholarly if you will, or ignorant, but remember that we hold with Leo XIII, 'The Church has no need of man's lie.'

The most scholarly Catholic historian of the Popes, Ludwig Pastor, grants that **Alexander lived the immoral life of the secular princes of his day,** both as Cardinal and as Pope. (*History of the Popes*, V, 363, VI, 140), that he obtained the papacy by the rankest simony. IBID, V. 385. And that he brought his high office into dispute by his unconcealed nepotism and lack of moral sense. VI, 139. He frees him, however from the Calumnious charges of incest and poisoning," IV, 135, "*The Question Box*," pp. 176, 177.

"The immoral life of secular princes of his day." "Rankest simony." "Unconcealed nepotism." "Lack of moral sense." All admitted by Rome's most scholarly Catholic historians. Yet Alexander VI, in spite of his "peccability," euphemism for sins which one dare not enumerate in detail, still stands on the Roman Catholic Church's register of the "Vicars of Christ," **gifted with infallibility, but not graced with holiness.**

What more can be said? **Either God through the centuries has by His Spirit directed the appointments of this long line of Popes, or He has not.** If He has not, nothing of man's doing is or has been bind-

ing upon him. But what of the alternative? **For any man to say that such evil men as appear all too often in this “unbroken succession” of “infallible Popes” were there by God’s appointment is surely sinking into the deepest depths of blasphemy.** Because the Lord says, “Be ye holy for I am holy.”

Now in contrast with the above, let us look at the standard that the Lord has set for bishops. “A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God?) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil,” 1 Timothy 3:2-7.

“For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God;

not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers,” Titus 1:5-9.

“The elders which are among you I exhort, whom am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth GRACE to the humble,” 1 Peter 5:1-5.

Now from these passages and others, you can see that **there is nothing in Scripture to support papal infallibility.** But much is said concerning the spiritual and moral qualifications of those whom God would have to bishop, oversee, His flock on Earth, the believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, the universal Church, which He bought with His own blood on the cross.

THE CATHOLIC DOCTRINE OF SIN

According to Roman Catholic theology sins are of two kinds; mortal and venial. Mortal sins make the offender an enemy of God, and condemn him to the penalty of hell fire. Venial sins on the contrary, do not make a man an enemy of God, nor do they involve him in eternal damnation.

As the name “venial” means and indicates, they are pardonable. Mortal sins can only be absolved by the priest after confession and the performance of prescribed penances. Venial sins do not require confession as a thing of necessity, though it is recommended as being laudable and safe.

Here is a quote, “There is no absolute necessity to go to confession except in cases of grave sin, but it is a laudable and customary practice to do so, as a safe preparation for communion, and also to confess all sins that the soul is conscious of, without drawing a hard and fast distinction between graver and lighter sins.” *“What the Catholic Church Is and What It Teaches,”* page 24, published by Catholic Truth Society.

It may not be a very difficult task for the devout Catholic who makes frequent confession to remember all the conscious sins and failures of a short period of time, but for the average man who only goes to confessional more occasionally, it is obviously impossible, and he must, as it were, himself take stock of the past, select those sins which he thinks may be mortal, and confess them to the priest, leaving what he considers to be the more trifling and therefore venial sins to be dealt with by the easier way of prayers, fasting, good works, etc., or else suffer for them in Purgatory.

But where does the boundary between mortal and venial sins lie? He needs guidance, and Rome provides it. “Three things are required to make a mortal sin: 1. Grave Matter. 2. Full Knowledge. 3. Full Consent.

1. Grave Matter: The sinful thought, word, deed or omission must be of grave im-

portance, e.g., injury of one’s neighbor’s character in a serious matter, stealing a large sum, or a small sum from a poor man.

2. Full Knowledge: Not done by mistake or before we knew clearly what we were about. The mind must realize the sinfulness of the act at the time it was done.

3. Full Consent: The will must deliberately agree to the temptation, whether of thought, word, or deed. If there was not full knowledge or consent, but hesitation in rejecting the temptation, the sin was venial, the soul was injured, but not killed.” Quoted from *“What Catholics Believe,”* page 14, Catholic Truth Society.

On the surface this seems to be fairly clear, but is it? The definitions are sadly indefinite to one who really wants to know how he stands in the matter of sins. What constitutes a “serious matter?” I have my ideas and you have your ideas, **but we have to do with God. His standards and not ours must count.**

What is a “large amount?” A “large amount” to make a mortal sin that will send me to hell? What is a “poor man?” And how much may I steal from him without having to go to hell? What is “full knowledge?” What about unknown sins?

The apostle Paul in his unconverted religious days had cruelly persecuted the Church, shutting up many of the believers in prison, and when they were to be put to death, giving his voice against them. Worse even than that, perhaps, he had compelled some of them to deny their Lord and to blaspheme His Name. But he told Agrippa, “I verily thought to myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the Name of Jesus of Nazareth,” Acts 26:9. He certainly did not have “full knowledge.” And in 1 Timothy 1:13 he says, “I did it ignorantly in unbelief.” And yet he does not call his sin venial, but calls himself the “chief of sinners,” 1 Timothy 1:15.

What about the first sin recorded in the Bible, and the first sin committed by human-kind? Was the fruit wrongfully taken from the god of all the earth intrinsically equivalent to a "large sum," or a "small sum from a poor man?" Was there full knowledge?

In 1 Timothy 2:14 we read, "The woman being deceived was in transgression." Was there "full knowledge," full consent without hesitation? No. There was attempted resistance at first, though it was soon overborne by the devil. He assured her the sin would not be mortal, but God's Word stood. For He said, "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Genesis 2:17. And when she did eat, she died **spiritually**.

It was not the triviality or otherwise of the outward trappings which were the true measure of the sin, **but the act of disobedience to the Word of God, and disobedience to the plan and will of God.** One man may be like him who came to Jesus Christ, "full of leprosy," a terrible and a loathsome sight, but the disease is the same. And its outworking in both is death.

So with sin. James 1:15, "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." We are born dead in trespasses and sin, conscience is no sure guide by which to judge ourselves, **for the effect of sin is to deaden the voice of the conscience.** David asked, "Who can understand his errors?" Psalm 19:12. Solomon, his son, famous among men of all time for his wisdom said, "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool." Proverbs 28:26. God, speaking by the mouth of Jeremiah said, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Who can know it?" And then He answered His own question, as it were, "I, the Lord, search, the heart. I try the

reins even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." Hebrews 17:9, 10.

In the Old Testament, Ezekiel 18:20, we read, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." The New Testament with its fuller revelation of the GRACE of God in Christ does not whittle down or modify that solemn statement, but confirms it with something equally stern and uncompromising, "The wages of sin is death," Romans 6:23. So there is no qualifying adjective. It does not say, "The wages of mortal sin is death," **for death is the wages for ALL sin.**

But thank God that we have the Word of God as our criterion. "But God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us," Romans 5:8. "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sins," 1 John 1:7. "And Christ is our propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world," 1 John 2:2. "Who bare by His own self in His own body on the tree, our sins, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes we were drawn together," 1 Peter 2:24.

So that what no priestly absolution or accumulated merit can accomplish, **Christ our Saviour does for us by His death on the cross.** Since Jesus Christ "became sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him," **then sin is no longer the issue and CHRIST IS THE ISSUE.** And we know that **we will be judged according to our works and not according to our sins,** as per Revelation 20.

"There is one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus."

ARE CATHOLICS CHRISTIANS OR MARIANS?

1. THE VENERATION OF MARY.

The Roman Catholic Church in actual fact worships Mary, the mother of Jesus, more than it worships either God or Christ. For instance, as we have seen in our study, when praying with a rosary, one paternoster is followed by ten "Ave Marias."

Jesus Christ is called the righteous King. Mary is called the merciful queen. In the Papal Bull of Sixtus IV, adopted by the Council of Trent, she is called "Queen of heaven, who intercedes with the King, whom she has brought forth." Although he is willing to pardon men, his righteousness makes him very stern, so much so that he caused his son to atone for our sins. The Son of God is also severe, and although he sacrificed himself and died upon the cross, he also commanded his disciples to carry their crosses, and by and by he will judge the world, casting those who have not believed on him into everlasting punishment of Hell. Only Mary, they say, is filled with mercy. Roman Catholicism attributes to Mary most of the characteristics of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayers were first offered to Mary toward the end of the fourth century, and during the fifth century her worship was in full flourish. In the Roman Church there are 14 feasts which are universally observed in honor of Mary. She is also remembered every Saturday, and the whole month of May is dedicated to her. Besides this, there are eight other feasts observed in her honor, but these are more local. The year 1953 was celebrated as the Marian year. Since God chose Mary to be the mother of the Lord Jesus, we cannot but esteem her highly, honoring her as a pattern for all motherhood. But the Lord Jesus said clearly, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." Matthew 4:10. This being so, to worship Mary is erroneous and not in any way pleasing to God.

1. Nowhere in the Scripture is there recorded any worship of Mary, nor any command to do so.

2. The wise men worshipped the young child. They did not worship Mary. Matthew 2:11, "And when they were come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped Him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto Him gifts: gold, and frankincense, and myrrh."

3. In referring to Jesus and Mary together, the Bible puts Jesus Christ first. Matthew 2:11, 13, 14, 20, 21.

4. Mary herself confessed that she was a sinner, for she needed a Saviour. Luke 1:46, 47, "I rejoice in God my Saviour."

5. The last reference to Mary is found in Acts 1:14, "These all continued with one accord in prayer, and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus and his brethren."

A. At that time Mary was earnestly and unitedly praying with other believers as one of them.

B. Other books of the New Testament, although frequently discussing the subject of salvation, never once connect it with Mary, or make any reference to her.

C. The book of Revelation refers to the saved in glory and to the "Lamb as it has been slain," Revelation 5:6, in the midst of the throne, to the praising host, Revelation 5:7-14, to the twelve foundations of the city, with the names of the 12 apostles of the Lamb upon them, Revelation 21:14. But there is not a single reference to Mary.

D. Since after Acts 1:14 neither the Scriptures nor early Church history makes any reference to Mary, it may well be that this was in the purpose of God, because of the grievous errors of those who in later days would call her the "Mother of God," and worship and pray to her.

6. The Lord Jesus Christ is the one and only Saviour, and He is abundantly able and willing to save us. Acts 4:12, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Hebrews 7:25, "Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." So, there is no occasion for Mary's intercessions.

7. The verses in Scripture which speak of the Mediator between God and men not only DO NOT mention her, but on the contrary expressly exclude her saying, "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus," 1 Timothy 2:5. Hebrews 8:6, "But now hath He obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also He is the Mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises." Hebrews 9:15, "And for this cause He is the Mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." 1 John 2:1, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous."

8. Roman Catholics call Mary the "Mother of God," but God is an infinite and eternal Spirit, and to call her "Mother of God" is absurd. She was the Mother of the "man Christ Jesus." Elizabeth called her "The Mother of my Lord," Luke 1:43 cf 25, but that is very different from "Mother of God."

9. Because many mothers have influenced their sons, the Roman Church thought that Mary could also influence the Lord Jesus Christ, and for this reason regarded her as a Mediator. But the relationship between ordinary mothers and their sons cannot be compared with the relationship now existing between Mary and the risen Son of God. There are passages which show that even on Earth, from the time when the Lord began His ministry, neither Mary nor any other member of the family could interfere with His

work. Three times Mary tried to do this, but the Lord would not permit it.

A. On the occasion when He visited the temple as a young man. Luke 2:48, 49, "And when they saw Him, they were amazed, and His mother said unto Him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy Father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And He said unto them, How is it that ye sought Me? KNEW YE NOT THAT I MUST BE ABOUT MY FATHER'S BUSINESS." He was about His Father's business, not His mother's. This was God His Father.

B. At the wedding feast of Cana of Galilee. John 2:3, 4, "And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto Him, they have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come."

C. At Capernaum, when He was teaching. Mark 3:31, 33, "There came then His brethren and His mother, and, standing without, sent unto Him, calling Him. And He answered them saying, Who is My mother, or My brethren?" Matthew 12:50, "For whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

10. To the woman who said, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked," He replied, "Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it," Luke 11:27, 28.

The Lord did not say that His mother was not blessed in her relationship to Him as mother, but He did say that the blessedness of those who kept His Word was even greater. This verse by itself shows how utterly the Church of Rome has gone wrong in exalting Mary as it has done.

11. Apart from the work of redemption which our Lord Jesus Christ finished on the cross, Hebrews 10:20, there is no way for anyone to draw near to God. "Jesus saith unto him, I am the Way, the Truth and the Life and no man cometh unto the Father but by Me," John 14:6. Hebrews 10:20, "By a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say

His flesh.” Therefore, to pray to Mary is not merely futile, it is blasphemous.

12. In praying to Mary, the suppliant says, “Pity us sinners.” But Mary has no place in God’s Plan of salvation beyond her place as the human mother of Jesus. When the angel spoke to Joseph about Mary he said, “She shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His Name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins,” Matthew 1:21. Note the masculine pronouns, “He,” “His.”

13. The Lord Jesus Christ gave specific promises to those who will come to Him. “All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me, and him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out,” John 6:37. “Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,” Matthew 11:28. There is no need for any human being or angel to remind Him of His promises.

14. To pray to Mary is nothing less than to doubt the reliability of God’s Word. Romans 5:8, “God commendeth His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” “God who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, by GRACE are ye saved.” Ephesians 2:4, 5.

15. Before the Roman Catholic Church existed ancient heathen religions already had their female deities. Among these are the goddess Kuan-Yin of Buddhism, the goddess of mercy, and the queen of heaven of the Babylonians. Jeremiah 7:18, “The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke Me to anger.” Jeremiah 44:15-23, 25.

16. It is estimated that tens of thousands of people are praying to Mary in every language every second of the day and night. Since she is only a human being, how can she from year to year, night and day, without a break, bear those numberless prayers? Only God can do that. But not only **CAN** He, but He **DOES**. Maybe that is why in our day

the Catholic Church has another translation of the Bible where all the masculine genders are now in the feminine gender.

BASED ON THIS, ARE CATHOLICS CHRISTIANS OR MARIANS?

2. THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF MARY.

E. R. Hull, a Jesuit Priest says, “The doctrine of the immaculate conception simply means that our Lady, in view of her exalted office, **WAS ENDOWED WITH GOD’S GRACE FROM THE FIRST MOMENT OF HER EXISTENCE, INSTEAD OF BEING CONCEIVED AND BORN IN ORIGINAL SIN...** We cannot infer that Mary did not owe her redemption to Christ’s death, but only that the GRACE of redemption was conferred beforehand in view of Christ’s future merit.” This is written in *“What is the Christian Church?”* page 35, Catholic Truth Society.

Now, searching for some Scripture to bolster up this doctrine, Rome has this to offer: Luke 1:28, “And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.” According to the Catholic Church, the words “Thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee,” contain the hidden meaning “Thou art without original sin.” They also imply that Mary, from her birth until her death was entirely free from sin.

All that we can say in reply to that is that it take more than unproved assertions to turn fiction into fact. The fact is that, while our Lord Himself was sinless, 2 Corinthians 5:21, “For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin: that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him”) being conceived by God the Holy Spirit, Luke 1:35, “And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow

thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God"), His mother, highly favored to be the mother of the humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ, was herself by nature and natural birth a sinner. The words, "Hail, thou art highly favored," mean just what they say, that she was indeed blessed among women, and there is not the least ground to read into them the "hidden meaning" that Rome would put there, that she was without original sin.

There is nothing either in Scripture or in history to support such an interpretation, for it bears no relation to the words, but is a bald Romish addition. Not only do the Scriptures avoid attributing sinlessness to Mary, but they point quite the other way.

A. In Mary's song of thanksgiving she said, "My soul doth magnify the Lord and My Spirit hath rejoiced in God My Saviour." Only sinners need a Saviour, and Mary knew her need and expressed it simply and naturally. Her body magnified the Lord, the virgin birth of Christ, and her soul magnified the Lord in her personal salvation, and her spirit rejoiced. Only believers in Christ have a human spirit. Her body, soul and spirit magnified the Lord Jesus Christ.

B. When Mary went to the temple with Joseph for her purification according to the Law, she presented a blood offering, by which she recognized herself as a sinner and in need of atonement. Luke 2:22-24, "And when the days of her purification according to the Law of Moses were accomplished, they brought Him to Jerusalem, to present Him to the Lord: (As it is written in the Law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord.) And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the Law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons."

C. Some of the ancestors of our Lord were great and noble, others however, were ignoble. But it was through that line with its variations of light and darkness that our Lord was born into this world. God sent His Son "In the likeness of sinful flesh," Romans 8:3. In the line of His genealogy appears the names of three adulteresses: Tamar, Mat-

thew 1:3, Genesis 38:16; Rahab, Matthew 1:5, Joshua 2:1; and Bathsheba, Matthew 1:9, 2 Samuel 11:4; but they also found mercy and GRACE.

Very few of the ancestors of our Lord of whom any details are given in the Old Testament are without record as having fallen into sin at some point or another. The New Testament record of Mary gives us the picture of a pure-minded maiden, living in the fear of God, but nevertheless needing salvation as did others. Never was it written of Mary, "Who did no sin," as it was written of the Son she bore.

We have no right to speak of Mary as being sinless with so many Bible passages which speak of the universality of the old sin nature and human sin. Psalm 51:5, "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." David's birth. Isaiah 53:6, "ALL WE LIKE SHEEP HAVE GONE ASTRAY, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Romans 3:23, "FOR ALL HAVE SINNED, and come short of the glory of God." Romans 5:12, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, FOR THAT ALL HAVE SINNED." "In Adam all die, in Christ all are made alive."

D. We can sympathize with Mary having to live in a home where Jesus Christ's own brothers did not believe in Him. John 7:5, "For neither did his brethren believe in Him."

But Mary appears to have done wrong when she came with them to restrain the Lord and take Him back home, by force if necessary. Mark 3:20, 21, 31-35, "And the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. And when His friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on Him, for they said, He is beside Himself... There came then His brethren and His mother, and, standing without sent unto Him, behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee, and He answered them saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren? And He looked round about on them which sat about Him, and said, behold My mother and My brethren. For whosoever shall do the will of

God, the same is My brother, and My sister, and mother."

It seems evident that on this occasion, torn by natural anxiety, and perhaps under pressure from our Lord's brethren, Mary went with them to stop Him. Her action was not prompted by faith, but by fear, and she was evidently not in the will of God in thus coming.

This, then, is the testimony of Scripture. But what about the testimony of later history? Well, judging by the writings of the Church fathers, it is evident that until the 5th century Mary was regarded as a virtuous woman in the same way that most other women were virtuous. She had original sin, however, and could herself sin. From the 6th to the 12th centuries it was held that she had original sin, but by Divine protection was preserved from personal sin. It was not until early in the 12th century that the Roman Church first observed December 8 as the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

Discussion concerning this continued through the 13th and 14th centuries, several of the earlier "infallible" Popes maintained that she had original sin, and the names of about 200 theologians are given, all of whom supported this view. Nevertheless, on December 8, 1854, the Pope promulgated the doctrine of the immaculate conception as an article of faith to be received and believed by all. This also, as an official pronouncement was "infallible."

Papal infallibility notwithstanding, it is certain from all the evidence available that the doctrine of the immaculate conception is unscriptural and false. Mary is the mother of our Lord, not because she was immaculate, but because of the wonderful condescension of God toward a woman, weak in herself, but strong in her faith in God, and in her readiness to do the will of God at whatever cost.

"We have this treasure in earthen vessels."

3. THE CONTINUING VIRGINITY OF MARY, OR MARY IS EVER VIRGIN.

The Roman Catholic Church claims that Mary continued in her virginity. That is why she is continually referred to as the Virgin. In holding this belief, Rome has been influenced by heathen religions, in some of which marriage was considered an unholy thing, so that those who preserved their virginity were holier and more enlightened than the rest.

The doctrine of the continued virginity of Mary has no solid foundation.

A. For the first three centuries of the Christian Era, it was not once mentioned.

B. The Scriptures do not bear it out. On the contrary, the Bible says that Joseph "knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn Son, and he called His Name Jesus," Matthew 1:25. The language clearly indicates that there was no continuing virginity. Moreover, the very word "firstborn" implies that Mary had other children afterward.

C. Contrary to the tenets of heathen cults, a mother in Israel had far greater honor than a virgin, and Mary was a Jewish woman in Israel. Luke 23:28, 29. "But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For behold the days are coming, in the which they shall say, blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck." After the virgin Mary gave birth to Jesus Christ, she is referred to in Scripture as His mother.

D. The Church of Rome says that the brothers and sisters of the Lord Jesus Christ were really His cousins, and the Greek Orthodox Church says they were his half-brothers and sisters. There are good reasons, however to recognize them as His real brothers and sisters.

1. The New Testament refers to His brethren on seven occasions. John 1:12. Matthew 12:46 with Mark 3:31 and Luke 8:19. Matthew 13:55, 56 with Mark 6:3. John 7:3-5, 10. Acts 1:14. 1 Corinthians 9:5. Galatians 1:19. In none of these passages is there the least hint that they were anything other than Jesus Christ's own brothers.

2. In the New Testament brothers and sisters are distinguished from cousins. Mary and Elizabeth were cousins. Luke 1:36, "And behold thy cousin Elizabeth. She hath also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren." And Elizabeth had other cousins besides. Luke 1:58, "And her neighbors and her cousins heard how the Lord had showed great mercy upon her, and they rejoiced with her." The Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, made this self-same distinction. Luke 21:16, "And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren (the same Greek word used for the brethren of Christ), and the kinsfolk (the word used of Mary and Elizabeth, translated cousins), and friends."

Not once are the brethren of the Lord called either cousins or kinsfolk.

3. There is not the least suggestion that they were half-brothers, Joseph's children by a supposed first wife. Had this been so, who looked after the children when Joseph and Mary were refugees in Egypt. Matthew 2:13. And if Joseph had sons older than Jesus Christ, then the throne of David would be theirs, and not His. Luke 1:31-33, "And behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call His Name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David. And He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end."

4. Messianic prophecy confirms the correct interpretation of the Old Testament in the New Testament. Psalm 69 reveals that the mother of the Messiah had children. Psalm 69:8, "I am become a stranger unto My brethren, and an alien unto My mother's children, for the zeal of thine house hath eaten

Me up, and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon Me." John 2:17, "And His disciples remembered that it was written, the zeal of thine house hath eaten Me up."

E. The brothers of Christ lived with His mother. John 2:12, "After this He went down to Capernaum. He, and His mother, and His brethren, and His disciples, and they continued there not many days." Mark 6:3, "IS NOT THIS THE CARPENTER, THE SON OF MARY, THE BROTHER OF JAMES AND JOSES, AND OF JUDA, AND SIMON? AND ARE NOT HIS SISTERS HERE WITH US?"

With the exception of John 7:3-5, 10, Jesus' brethren are never referred to again apart from His mother. If they were not his own brothers, why should this be?

From all these Scriptures we can only deduct that the brothers of Jesus Christ were His own brethren, and not cousins or half-brothers. Although the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches, and even some Protestants, think that because Mary was a virgin when Jesus Christ was born, she must have preserved her virginity to the end and that she and Joseph never afterward lived together as husband and wife, we conclude that this is not the teaching of the Word of God.

That Jesus Christ was born of a virgin is an important Bible doctrine. It was necessary in order that He should be born without any trace of hereditary sin and deterioration. But that Mary bore other children after the birth of Jesus Christ in no way detracts from His glory, though it does show that "marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled," Hebrews 13:4 cf 1 Timothy 4:3, 4. "Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the Truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving."

The forbidding of marriage is the doctrine of demons.

4. THE ASSUMPTION OF MARY.

Roman Catholicism claims for Mary, the mother of our Lord, a holiness so supreme in quality, that being free from sin, her body was not subject to decay, and that three days after her death it was caught up to heaven, there in the presence of God reunited with her spirit. She was crowned queen of heaven, and seated at Christ's right hand. Though Jesus Christ is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and no man cometh to the Father but by Him," John 14:6. Rome claims that Mary is also the way, the truth and the life, and apart from her, no man can come to the Lord Jesus Christ. Rome does not attempt to bring forward any historical proofs of this amazing doctrine.

The next is taken from "*The Question Box*," page 361. "The doctrine has never been defined by the Church, although its wide acceptance since the 6th century renders it a certain doctrine that cannot be denied by Catholics without rashness. It cannot be proved from the Bible, or from contemporary historical witnesses, but it rests on such solid theological principles, that many bishops have written the *Apostolic See*, requesting its definition as a dogma of the faith. It certainly seems most fitting that the body of the immaculate mother of God should not taste corruption, and that it should share in the triumph of her Son, the risen Christ." Unquote.

So the doctrine rests only on romish theological theorizing, based upon the false assumptions that Mary was the mother of God, and not just the human mother of our Lord's humanity, and that she was by birth, and in her whole life immaculate and her body therefore incorruptible.

The doctrine of the assumption appears for the first time in the 7th century. It was

then based upon some writings of the 3rd and 4th centuries, which had long before been declared heretical. Additions had been made to some manuscripts to give the doctrine greater credibility. These additions were known to be fraudulent, but the doctrine was by then so widely accepted that no one objected to them. The day of the festival, August 15, was fixed early in the 7th century, but was not universally observed until 818. On All Saints' Day, November 1, 1950, the Pope formally commanded all Catholics everywhere to receive the doctrine without doubt, on pain of excommunication.

It seems that the further we are removed from apostolic days, the more incredible become the Roman Catholic doctrines necessary to salvation. It can only be that the doctrine of the assumption is the topstone of the mariolatry which makes her the way to God. Seeing that for 1900 years and more Roman Catholics could at will receive or reject this doctrine, why has it become so vital to salvation now? It was not essential to salvation before, why should it become so in 1950? This surely is significant to make thoughtful people see the utter fallacy of papal infallibility, and the falseness of this doctrine also.

Now Mary's character is beautiful, and an example for Christian motherhood. At the wedding feast she said to the servants, "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it," John 2:5. Now that is the counsel she would give to us today if she were here. She would not accept our worship, and she would not accept our adoration, but would direct our attention to Christ, who alone is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life." And the fact that He is the one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus. And there is salvation in none other but Him.

Judges 5:24 says about another woman who was blessed, Jael, "Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be, blessed shall she be above women in the tent." And she was blessed because of killing the enemies of Israel.

PURGATORY

The idea of Purgatory finds its roots in Buddhism and other ancient religions, long before the existence of the Roman Catholic Church. Evidences of its introduction into Christian thought are found in some of the writings of the early Church fathers, as far back as the third and fourth centuries of the Christian era, but it had no officially recognized place until the time of Gregory I. He added the concept of purifying fires to the already current belief that there was a place somewhere between heaven and hell, to which were sent the souls of those who were not bad enough for hell with its endless torments, and not good enough for heaven with its holy and eternal joys. These purifying fires would gradually consume all defilement, until the soul was fit to see God.

By the 11th century it was regularly taught that whereas the unrepentant wicked at death went straight to hell, and a very few souls of exceptional merit went straight to heaven, the generality of Christian people must of necessity pass through Purgatory. It was not until 1459 that the doctrine was established as an article of faith in the Roman Catholic Church. "*The Ground of Catholic Doctrine Contained in the Profession of Faith*," published by Pius IV, says by way of question and answer: QUESTION: "What kind of people go to Purgatory?"

ANSWER: 1. "Such as die guilty of lesser sins, which we commonly call venial, as many Christians do, who, either by sudden death or otherwise, are taken out of this life before they have repented for these ordinary failings."

2. "Such as, having formerly been guilty of greatest sins, have not made full satisfaction for them to Divine justice." Here is an added thought: In spite of the fact that according to Romish teaching the souls in Purgatory have already been justified by and at baptism, Divine justice has not thereby been fully satisfied, so that the soul, though escaping the torments of hell, must still endure the

temporary punishment for its sins in Purgatory.

This was categorically stated by the Council of Trent. "If anyone should say that after the reception of the grace of justification, the guilt is so remitted to the penitent sinner, and the penalty of eternal punishment destroyed, that no temporal punishment remains to be paid, either in this world, or in the future, before the access to the kingdom can be open, let him be accursed," Sec. VI. Purgatory, therefore, is not merely purifying, it is penal as well. The Purgatory fires, we are told, are greatly to be feared. "The fire of Purgatory will be more terrible than all corporal sufferings together. **One single day in that place of expiation might be compared to a thousand of earthly suffering.**" "Spiritual banquet offered to souls in Purgatory."

"**Purgatory According to the Revelation of the Saints**," a booklet issued under the imprimatur of the Archbishop of Montreal, tells of a Franciscan monk, grievously ill, who was given the option of lingering on earth for another year or dying at once and spending three days in Purgatory. He elected to die. After being one day in Purgatory, the angel visited him, and was accused of cruelty, having left him there to suffer for a century instead of three days as stipulated. But the angel assured him that he had been there for only 24 hours, and it was the extremity of his anguish that made him think he had been there so long. He was released, and in the sight of his brethren his soul returned to the body, whereafter he exhorted them to rigorous penance for their smallest faults, that they might escape the sufferings he had endured."

The same book tells of a revelation given to St. Margaret De Pazzi, who in a trance, visited Purgatory for two hours, during which time she walked about the convent garden, wringing her hands and uttering awful lamentations as she viewed different compartments of torment. Priests and nuns were there. In

another place were the impenitent and disobedient. In yet another, misers and liars, the latter having molten lead poured down their throats." These are but selections, and we are struck by the resemblance of the torments to those of the Buddhist hell portrayed in the temples of the Far East.

And what is the duration of these sufferings which the Christian man is supposed to face at death, and in which his forefathers are already involved, and to which the children he has begotten are hastening? No one can tell. All is in the realm of speculation and hideous dream. One Catholic writer, Mazzerelli, bases his calculation on 30 venial sins per day, and a day in Purgatory for each, **making a grand total of 1800 years for sixty years of lifetime down here.** With yet more to be added for mortal sins, absolved but not fully expiated.

Another records the case of Pope Innocent III, who appeared to St. Lutgarda in the flames of Purgatory and told him that he was to suffer there till the day of judgment, this from a Pope who in his day claimed to be and was acknowledged as the vicar of Christ, the head of His Church on earth, with the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven in his hands, able to loose and able to bind. Could anything be more incredible? Yet there the record stands, to be received and believed.

What evidence does Rome bring forward in proof of the existence of this melancholy place, prepared not for the reprobate, but for Christians? First, she appeals to a few passages of Scripture, from which inference and nothing more are drawn. Matthew 12:32, "Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." The inference drawn is that since there is one sin which cannot be forgiven in the world to come, there must be others which can, and since there are no sins in heaven to be forgiven, and none in hell can be forgiven, there must be a Purgatory.

Matthew 12:36, "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." The inference? God could not send a soul to hell for things so trivial as idle words, therefore there must be a Purgatory.

1 Corinthians 3:15, "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved: yet so as by fire." The inference? There are purgatorial fires which burn away the dross, but from which the soul being purified will eventually escape. It should be observed that the apostle's subject in this passage is **not** men's sins, but **Christian service. Works will be burned, not sins small or large.**

In verse 9 Paul says, "We are laborers together with God." Then he goes on to say, "According to the GRACE of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon." He did not continue at Corinth, but passed on to the other places where as yet Christ was not preached. Others carried on the work at Corinth, building the spiritual house with true believers, but they were not so wise or faithful, and built into this temple of God those who were producing dead works, "hay, wood, and stubble." **In the day of their Lord's return, they themselves would be saved, but all their works would be destroyed.** There would be no reward for their service, but instead only loss. "Gold, silver and precious stones," rewarded. "Hay, wood and stubble," burnt up.

Luke 12:59, "I tell thee, thou shalt not depart thence, till thou hast paid the very last mite." Payment can be made in Purgatory, and the soul eventually finds release, is the inference. But surely this is no more than an emphatic way of saying, "Never." It is part of a parable, and the language is parabolic.

1 Timothy 2:1, "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men." The inference is that the apostle had the dead in mind as well as the living. But that can hardly be true, unless, like the heathen, we believe in ghosts. And that the spirits of dead men can come back to annoy the

living, for the apostle gives as his reason for this charge, "That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty," 1 Timothy 2:2.

"It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins," 2 Maccabees 12:46. The inference is that it is therefore right and useful to pray for loosing of souls in Purgatory. The first answer to this is that the books of Maccabees are Apocryphal, and **cannot be used as a basis for doctrine**. In any case, the verse quoted **says nothing whatever about Purgatory**, and if accepted as accredited, history records only that Judas Maccabees did when he found votive offerings from heathen temples upon the bodies of his slain. What he wrote tells us what he thought, but does not establish a Christian doctrine.

The very fact that Rome has to appeal to such passages as these, **not one of which mentions Purgatory**, and then base its argument upon forced and unreliable deductions from them, shows how lacking in scriptural foundation is the doctrine of Purgatory. In seeking to defend it, she has recourse almost entirely to selected quotations from the Church fathers. Practically the only point at which the Church fathers are in full agreement with each other is their acceptance of the canonical Scriptures as their final court of appeal, however widely their interpretation may differ.

But from the Bible itself Rome can find no solid foundation for this truly monstrous doctrine, while **the whole trend of Scripture teaching is dead against it**. What methods of release from the pains of Purgatory for oneself and for others does Rome lay down? Most definitely she asserts that there are ways at least of alleviating the torments of those suffering in purgatorial fires, and even of complete deliverance from them, though with no certainty as to time.

Concerning this the Council of Trent declared: "Since the Catholic Church, instructed by the Holy Spirit from the sacred writings, and the ancient traditions of the fathers, hath taught in holy councils, and lastly in this ecu-

menical council, that there is a Purgatory, and that the souls detained there are assisted by the suffrages of the mass, this holy council commands all bishops diligently to endeavor that the wholesome doctrine concerning Purgatory, delivered unto us by venerable fathers and sacred councils be believed, held, taught and everywhere preached by Christ's faithful," Sec. XXV.

What are the "suffrages" which assist those in Purgatory? There are several besides the masses mentioned here:

"PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD." This is supposed to be supported by the passage in 2 Maccabees and 1 Timothy. "Spiritual bouquet offered to souls in Purgatory." "Let us think before going to rest of the extreme torments of the poor souls in Purgatory, and pray for them."

Apart from special collects in the liturgical service, Roman Catholics are expected to use the rosary in their personal devotions, to number the Paternosters (Our Fathers) and Ave Marias (Hail Marys) which are repeated either for themselves or "with intention" for others, to secure for them easement or remission of their pains. The use of the beads is very ancient, but the rosary is claimed to have been given and taught to St. Dominic by the virgin Mary, and its use, when the beads have been duly blessed, is efficacious to secure many indulgences. What is known as the crown chaplet for the dead, offered to the virgin Mary, can, according to Roman Catholic authority, secure not less than 23,300 days indulgence.

"MASSES." This is perhaps the chief means employed, money being paid to the priest for the saying of a stipulated number of masses "with intention" for the one in Purgatory for whom they are being said. It is claimed that not only does the one for whom they are said benefit, but the one who pays for them accumulates merit as well.

"ALMSGIVING." To give alms "with intention" to apply them to the need of a soul in Purgatory is "to pour water on the flames which devour them." The claim is that "just as water quenches the fiercest fire, so alms

wash away sin." Alms, as well as masses, avail for the giver also.

The whole Romanist doctrine of Purgatory, and the means by which its torments can be avoided is full of tragic absurdities and self-contradictions, and is in direct conflict with the teaching of the Word of God. The doctrine of Purgatory derogates from the glory of Jesus Christ. **His redeeming blood is the only means of our cleansing from sin, both for this life and for that to come,** and to teach that the elements of fire, material fire, according to Cardinal Bellermino, is required to purge souls after death and make them fit for the Lord's presence, **renders the blood of Christ insufficient.**

When Jesus Christ therefore had received the vinegar, He said, "**It is finished,**" and He bowed His head, and gave up the Spirit. John 19:30. "And behold the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom," Matthew 27:51. "Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building. Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered once into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption for us," Hebrews 9:11, 12.

"By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified," Hebrews 10:14. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; And having an High Priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water," Hebrews 10:19-22.

The Scripture teaching concerning the believing dead sweeps away the Romish doctrine of Purgatory. The Lord Jesus Christ said to the dying thief, "Today thou shalt be with Me in Paradise," Luke 23:43. "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be FACE TO FACE WITH THE LORD," 2 Corinthians 5:8.

"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ: which is far better," Philippians 1:21, 23. "Your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory," Colossians 3:3, 4.

"I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing," 2 Timothy 4:6-8. "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them," Revelation 14:13. "**PRECIOUS IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD IS THE DEATH OF HIS SAINTS.**"

"Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season," Job 5:26. "Lo this, we have searched it, so it is: hear it, and know thou it for thy good," Job 5:27. "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the Earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me," Job 19:25-27.

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; THAT WHERE I AM, THERE YE MAY BE ALSO," John 14:1-3. "**ABSENT FROM THE BODY AND FACE TO FACE WITH THE LORD.**" "**TO DIE IS GAIN.**" "**PRECIOUS IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD IS THE DEATH OF HIS SAINTS.**"

There is NO PURGATORY. Purgatory means cleansing place. **Christ died for the sins of the whole world, and sin is no**

longer the issue. So when you accept Christ as your personal Saviour, "There is no con-

demnation to them who are in Christ Jesus our Lord."

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE CELIBACY OF THE PRIESTHOOD

Has the compulsory celibacy of the Roman Catholic priesthood any support in Scripture? Rome says it has, but in studying the Word of God, it leads us to an opposite conclusion. Rome builds her claim upon certain passages of Scripture, which we will examine in the light of their context.

Matthew 19:10, 11, "His disciples say unto Him. If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry. But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given." Rome's interpretation of "they to whom it is given" is that it applies to the priesthood. Our answer to that is that there is not the least indication in the passage of its context that this is so. What the Lord Jesus Christ said is of general application, no question of the priesthood is involved. **It is for everyone who is a believer.** This is addressed to all believers, **ALL BELIEVERS ARE PRIESTS ANYWAY.**

Peter, a child of his times, felt that so positive a restriction of divorce was a yoke too heavy to bear. Ever outspoken, he said, "If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry." Now our Lord's reply surely meant that celibacy for some would be more difficult. Then He went on to speak of some who were born impotent, of others who were made so by their masters, and others who had for the sake of the kingdom of heaven denied themselves the blessing of married life. His last words, "He that is able to receive it, let him receive it," clearly indicate that **in the Divine purpose men are free to marry or remain single as they are led of the Lord.** You still must consider the other Biblical principles, that "It is not good for man to be alone," and "It is better to marry than to burn." Matthew 22:30, "For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven."

The Lord Jesus Christ was faced with a problem by the Sadducees, who did not believe in the resurrection. It was almost certainly a fictitious case. They presented Him with a case of a woman who had married one of seven brothers. He had died leaving no children and according to the Mosaic Law, she was married to the second, to raise up children for the first brother. The same thing happened each time, with each brother, and at last the woman only was left, the widow of seven brothers, all with no children. Whose wife would she be in the resurrection? Our Lord's answer was that she would be the wife of none of them, because **the relationship of husband and wife belongs to this life only**, being ordained by God for the recreation and propagation of the human race. Genesis 1:27, 28, "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him: male and female created He them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it."

At death, the earthly relationships come to an end, having fulfilled the purpose for which they were given. In eternity man becomes in this particular like the angels, who, not belonging to earthly order, do not marry or give in marriage.

This passage has nothing to do with priestly celibacy, but lays down principles for redeemed humanity as a whole. 1 Corinthians 7:7, 8, "For I would that all men were even as I myself. BUT EVERY MAN HATH HIS PROPER GIFT OF GOD, ONE AFTER THIS MANNER, AND ANOTHER AFTER THAT. I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I." 1 Corinthians 9:5, "HAVE WE NOT POWER TO LEAD ABOUT A SISTER, A WIFE, AS WELL AS OTHER APOSTLES, AND AS THE BROTHERS OF THE LORD, AND CEPHAS (PETER)?" Indicating here that Peter was married, and we know that the

Lord Jesus Christ personally healed Peter's mother-in-law.

So we gather from this that Paul had no wife when he wrote this letter to the Corinthians, and that he recommended the unmarried state, but claimed his individual right to be married in the Lord if he so chose. His recommendation that certain Christians remain single was "For the present distress," 1 Corinthians 7:26. Up to that time official persecution had come from the Jewish authorities only, affecting only those of Jewish ancestry, but soon the Roman persecution was to begin, in which family responsibilities would greatly add to the suffering Christians would be called to endure.

Paul's words are almost an echo of our Lord's when he said to the daughters of Jerusalem in Luke 23:29, "Behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck." Paul recognized that every man has his own proper gift from God, one after this manner, another after that, endorsing the truth that married life is God's purpose for some and celibacy for others in those days before the Canon of Scripture was completed.

Paul IS NOT addressing a company of priests, but the whole Church at Corinth, with all that call upon the Name of Jesus Christ in every place, 1 Corinthians 1:2. Rome also quotes Revelation 14:4 as scriptural ground for the celibacy of the so-called clergy. "These are they which were not defiled with women: for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb." Now the reference here is to a special group of people, but there is no indication that they represent the Roman Catholic priesthood. It is said of these, "and in their mouth was found no guile, for they are without fault before the throne of God."

Now however kindly we may think of the priests of Rome, we hesitate to apply this application to them. These virgins mentioned in this passage are ALL JEWS, 12,000 from the 12 tribes of Israel: 144,000 Jews witnessing

for Jesus Christ in the Great Tribulation, called Jacob's Trouble. This follows the removal of the Church at the Rapture.

NOWHERE IN SCRIPTURE ARE PREACHERS OR CHURCH LEADERS FORBIDDEN TO MARRY. "Marriage is honorable in all," Hebrews 13:4. "All" includes apostles, popes, cardinals, bishops, and priests, as well as the so-called laity. **The Lord Jesus Christ Himself never taught compulsory celibacy.** He attended the wedding at Cana of Galilee and this sealed weddings and marriage as a Divine Institution. John 2:1-14.

He clearly acknowledged that the married state was appointed by God from the beginning as a normal condition of life. Matthew 19:4, 5, "And He answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?"

He chose married men to be His apostles. Matthew 8:14, 15, "And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, He saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever. And He touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them."

He also stated that some of them at least had children too, when He said in Matthew 19:28, 29, "Ye which have followed Me, shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. AND EVERYONE THAT HATH FORSAKEN WIFE, OR CHILDREN, OR LANDS, for My Name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold." Not once in His teaching did the Lord Jesus Christ suggest that celibacy was a highly spiritual state, higher than that of marriage. **Marriage is a Divine Institution, NOT CELIBACY.** Marriage is a Divine Institution to perpetuate the Gospel and the human race. **Celibacy was a temporary gift that PASSED with the completion of the Canon of Scripture in 96 A.D.**

Paul regarded marriage as right and proper and said that children of the believer are holy, 1 Corinthians 7:2, 14, "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have

his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.” “For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.” He maintained his own right to marry, though an apostle, even if for the Gospel's sake he did not exercise this right. 1 Corinthians 9:5, “Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?”

He takes it for granted in his epistles and even makes it a requirement for some officers in the Church to be married and have children. 1 Timothy 3:2, 5, 12, “A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach.” “For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God?” “Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.” Titus 1:5, 6, “For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: if any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly.”

Paul also uses marriage as a type of the relationship between Christ and His Church. Ephesians 5:25-28, “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it: That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, That He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.”

The Scriptures also couple “forbidding to marry” with other heresies described as “doctrine of demons,” and foretells that this heresy would enter the Church.

Compulsory celibacy for the Roman clergy was a gradual development. Although

the early Church fathers thought highly of celibacy, they never forbade the marriage of Church leaders. The next step was that when a priest became a widower, he was not permitted to remarry. Following this, the marriage of priests was discouraged, though not forbidden. Next, marriage was forbidden after ordination. COMPLETE PROHIBITION CAME IN 1075. IN 1139 THE TENTH GENERAL COUNCIL DISANNULLED ALL EXISTING MARRIAGES OF PRIESTS AND ORDERED THEM TO LEAVE THE WOMEN, SO THEY DIVORCED. They also commanded Roman Catholic congregations not to attend masses celebrated by married priests. The Council of Trent pronounced a curse upon all who said that the marriage of priests was lawful and right.

THE ERA WHEN CELIBACY WAS MOST HIGHLY ESTEEMED WAS THE GREATEST DARKNESS IN CHRISTENDOM, THE 11TH AND 12TH CENTURIES. Though in different places and at different times movements have been started in the Roman Church to legalize the marriage of priests, none has succeeded in gaining the consent of the highest Church courts.

The IMMORALITY AMONG THE PRIESTHOOD THAT RESULTED FROM THE PROHIBITION OF MARRIAGE IS A MATTER OF HISTORY. Often, at the highest levels in the Roman hierarchy, celibacy has not been a synonym for chastity.

1 Timothy 4:1-3, “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and DOCTRINES OF DEMONS. SPEAKING LIES IN HYPOCRISY; and having their conscience seared, FORBIDDING TO MARRY, AND COMMANDING TO ABSTAIN FROM MEATS, WHICH GOD HATH CREATED TO BE RECEIVED WITH THANKSGIVING BY THE FAITHFUL, AND BY THEM THAT HAVE KNOWN THE TRUTH.”

THE MIRACLES OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Rome claims that she alone has the seal of continuing miracles that were performed in Biblical times, and regards this as a proof that her communion is the one true Church of Christ on this Earth. She therefore makes much of miracles. It is interesting because Jesus Christ said that "The Jews seek a sign, and that Gentiles seek wisdom."

It is true that most Protestant churches today lay no claim to the many miracles of which Rome boasts, but it is far from true to say that there are none. Down to this present day God has heard the prayers of His children and sends answers, which can only be called miraculous.

We can cite, for instance, the orphanage which George Muller established in Bristol, with the two-fold purpose of caring for many needy children of that time, and to demonstrate that God is still the living God and hears the prayers of those who believe His promises. That orphanage is still in existence, and although George Muller himself has long since gone to be with the Lord, others have carried on his work on the principle of telling God alone of their needs. For a whole century those needs have been met without fail, the timing of gifts received not infrequently being too remarkable to be accounted for by coincidence. This institution is only one of many bearing like testimony to the intimate knowledge and care of God. He is faithful to all who walk in His Word, in His will, and trust Him wholly, whether they be male, female, Jew or Gentile, bond or free. The Lord always looks on the heart, 1 Samuel 16:7, and where He sees living faith in Himself, He can and does work for those who cry to Him, miraculously if need be.

Now concerning miracles, there are some things that we need to bear in mind: 1. Bible miracles were not continuous, regular occurrences. They appeared in the beginning of each new dealing of God with His people, or in times of crisis. Miracles were frequent when Israel came out of Egypt, in the days of

Elijah and Elisha, during the Babylonian captivity, in the time of our Lord, and during the apostolic era. Between the time of Adam to the death of the apostle John, the occasions when miracles were prominent were few and brief. From the time when the Gospel was first attested by many infallible proofs, Acts 1:1, 3, there has not been the same necessity for the witness of miracles apprehended by the senses, for we have the Holy Spirit to confirm the Truth of the Gospel.

2. The miracles of the New Testament all had practical value, to help, warn or punish, as was necessary. **Tongues was a WARNING, a discipline to Israel, and for those that believed not.** Now these elements are almost entirely lacking in the so-called Roman Catholic miracles which have been prominent in her history since the 4th century.

3. The miracles found in the Bible for the most part bear testimony to the whole body of Divine revelation, but the Roman Catholic miracles nearly always attest particular things to authenticate some relic, or some place of pilgrimage, or to lend support to some particular doctrine, as that of Purgatory.

4. The miracles of Scripture have a simplicity and dignity which attract and inspire greater faith in God. Miracles of the Bible were designed to focus the attention on either the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, or the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. **The miracles of Rome, on the other hand, tend rather to excite wonder at a magical performance rather than to call forth attention and worship to the Lord.**

What spiritual significance can there be in a crucifix which bowed its head to a worshipper, or any image of a virgin which moved its eyes, or a picture of a Madonna in Poland, which in 1949 wept tears of blood for the sufferings of the Church in that land? We are told that a priest wiped away the tears, but other tears came, and thousands came to pray before it and offer their gifts.

In a church in Naples are two phials preserved in a casket, which are said to contain the blood of a saint. Normally the blood is in the form of a fine powder, but three times a year, on the first Saturday in May, and on the 16th of September and December, it liquifies, at least that is what we are told. It is then carried through the streets in a solemn procession led by a cardinal and other high Church dignitaries. **Those who worship this relic are promised deliverance from all calamities.** The casket is sealed, and no scientist has ever been allowed to examine the phials or their contents. Everything has to be taken on trust.

5. Many of Rome's miracles, true or false, tend to increase the wealth and prestige of the Church, and lead the worshippers yet more deeply into superstition. Not a few Roman Catholic writers have expressed their disapproval over the years.

One of the best known pilgrimages in the world is in Lourdes, which is visited every year by hundreds of thousands of pilgrims, some going for healing, others to worship, and many more just out of curiosity as tourists. On February 11, 1858 a local girl of 14 said she had seen a vision of the Virgin there in a grotto. A spring of water was supposed to have sprung forth at that time, and thenceforth crowds of people came to see the wonder. The water was said to have healing power through the Virgin's merits. A church was built over the grotto and the fame of the shrine grew mightily.

Now a few claimed healing and went away leaving their crutches behind. The proportion of those claiming this is very small and medical opinion is divided as to the real results. The special correspondent of the Daily Telegraph wrote on February 12, 1858, that in the past hundred years the Roman Church had recognized 54 miraculous healings at Lourdes. The requirement now is for a full medical dossier from the pilgrim's doctor and a ruling by a medical commission that the cure is medically inexplicable.

There is no doubt about the devotion of many who make the pilgrimage, but devotion notwithstanding, most of them return as they

went. One thing is absolutely certain: **the pilgrims and tourists bring huge revenues to the Roman Catholic Church and also to the townspeople, the whole thing having become highly commercialized.**

Cardinal Gerleir, Archbishop of Lyons and Primate of Gaul, sang high mass on the Centenary Day in the presence of 17 bishops, ten of whom had come from abroad. The Pope's recital of the Angelus was relayed from Rome to a congregation of 40,000. Six million people were expected to visit Lourdes one year, filling 25,000 beds in 600 hotels, and pensions in the town and neighborhood. Pilgrims and tourists spend on an average between \$15 and \$30 on religious souvenirs and rosaries. The town of Lourdes alone spent some six million dollars in a recent ten year period enlarging car-parks, lengthening runways, etc.

What a contrast is all this pomp and show beside our Lord's repeated avoidance of popular clamor. In Mexico, Cuba, Argentina, Chile, and Portugal there have been similar manifestations, and thousands crowd to worship. Although called by different names locally, the Church of Rome maintains that all these are manifestations of Mary.

Not so well known among non-Romanists is the use of the scapular and medals worn on the body. In spite of Rome's protestations to the contrary, these are **charms to ward off evil influences**, making the wearer a sharer in the merits of the particular religious order which issues them. The scapular started as a vestment, consisting of a long piece of cloth, with a hole through the middle through which the head was placed, leaving the two ends of the cloth to hang over the body in front and behind. With the passing of time this has been reduced to two small pieces of woolen cloth each about two by three inches, one for the breast and one for the back, joined by straps over the shoulders.

The colors vary with the religious order, whether white, blue, red or purple. On the cloth is printed or embroidered representations of the virgin Mary, or the cross. Eighteen patterns of this charm are authorized, and any five may be worn at one time.

The most popular is the Carmelite order, founded in 1156. Today it is open to all, with two million people wearing its scapular. Whoever does this, they claim, keeping himself pure and reciting the requisite daily prayers, secures two benefits:

1). His body will be preserved from all calamity and attacks of the devil.

2). His soul will be saved. Pope Clement in the 12th century received a vision of the holy Mother, AND WAS ASSURED THAT EVERY SATURDAY SHE DESCENDS TO PURGATORY AND RELEASES ALL THE SOULS WEARING THE SCAPULAR.

In 1911 a medal was prepared, with the sacred heart embossed on one side and an image of the virgin on the other. This may be worn as a substitute for the scapulars, conveying all their merits, BUT A NEW MEDAL HAS TO BE BOUGHT EVERY YEAR AND IN SOME CASES A MONTHLY CONTRIBUTION IS EXTRACTED AS WELL.

Yet another amulet, but not for popular use, is the Agnus Dei, which consists of discs of various sizes made from the wax left over from candles used in worship. On one side these bear the imprint of a lamb and a cross, and on the other side, the arms of the Pope or the figure of some saint. The discs

are prepared and blessed by the Pope in the first year of his pontificate, and every seventh year thereafter. Some of these are bestowed as a special honor on cardinals and other people of rank and distinction, with the blessing pronounced upon them which has special mention of deliverance from perils by fire, flood, storm, pestilence, and childbirth. Rome herself admits that they were probably introduced as a Christian substitute for the pagan charms current in Rome in the 5th century.

6. The greatest miracle of all to which Rome lays claim, as we have seen, is that which is performed almost continually in a point of time, in multitudinous places all over the world, when by the words of consecration at the sacrifice of the mass, the wafer and the wine are said to be changed into the actual body and blood of our Lord, so to be offered to God and eaten by the communicant.

But this "miracle" has no scientific basis whatsoever. Every power of apprehension used in ordinary judgment has to be denied to make this claim. And God, who has given us powers of observation and reason, does not ask that of us. Faith rises above reason, **but it is not contrary to it.** when it goes against reason, then it becomes incredulity and superstition.

THE CATHOLIC ROSARY

The Roman Catholic concept of prayer calls for endless repetition of a few set prayers and ascriptions of praise addressed partly to God, but more frequently to the virgin Mary. The rosary is a combination of these short vocal prayers with meditation. That is, while the lips are murmuring the words, the mind is to be occupied with what are called the "mysteries," which are the main events in the lives of Christ and the virgin Mary. These are arranged in three groups:

1. The joyful mysteries. The annunciation, the visitation, the nativity, the presentation, and the finding in the temple.
2. The sorrowful mysteries. The agony in the garden, the scourging, the crowning with thorns, the carrying of the cross, and the crucifixion.
3. The glorious mysteries. The resurrection, the ascension, the descent of the Holy Ghost, the assumption of the virgin Mary, and her coronation.

The essential prayers to be cited are three: the Paternoster, (Our Father), the Ave Maria (Hail Mary) and the Gloria, crossing oneself on the forehead and breast. The creed is first recited, then one Paternoster, followed by ten Aves and the Gloria, to which, if desired, other set prayers can be added. To assist in counting these prayers, a threaded string of beads is used (the beads as well as the prayers being called the rosary).

The Buddhists of the Far East, the Brahmans of India, the Lamas of Tibet, the old pagans of Rome, and the people of Ephesus in their worship of Diana, Acts 19:28, all existing before the Roman Catholic Church came into existence, constantly used beads in reciting their many prayers, as do also the Moslems when repeating the name of Allah.

The rosary used by the ordinary Catholic lay worshippers consists of 50 small beads, divided into groups of ten called "decades,"

separated by five larger beads called "paters," because they are held between the fingers when the paternoster is recited. Then the following ten small beads are taken into the fingers one by one while the ten Aves are repeated, after which the Gloria is repeated, all this while the mind is fixed upon the first mystery, the nativity. And so on, until the prayers for the whole of the 15 mysteries have been said, the total being 180, without any extras, taking one and two hours to recite, which time can however be divided over several periods. Before the beads can be used, they must be blessed by the priest to make them holy. Though the beads may be used anywhere, the prayers have special efficacy when recited in the presence of the blessed sacraments.

The purpose of this praying is, of course, the accumulation of merit in order to secure indulgences. "*The Holy Rosary*," page 7, Catholic Truth Society. "It is well to make a general intention of gaining all the indulgences possible each time one says the rosary." A list is given of six different indulgences available all the year round, and four other specially available during the month of October, while yet more can be secured by joining the confraternity of the Holy Rosary.

The fallacies of merit, extra-merit, and indulgences we will discuss under the subject of indulgences. Here it is only necessary to note that **the telling of beads finds no place in the teaching either of our Lord or the apostles, and that the practice is in DIRECT OPPOSITION to our Lord's own command. So that to pray the rosary is not only NO MERIT, but is actually OFFENSIVE TO HIM**, because the Lord Himself said in Matthew 6:7, 8, "When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do, for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them, for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him."

Needless to say, this admonition was not intended to hinder people from spending time in true prayer to God. Jesus Christ Himself went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God the Father. Luke 6:12, “And it came to pass in those days, that He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.”

When we express our heartfelt desire, we are not forbidden to repeat the same words, for the Lord did this in the Garden of Gethsemane. Matthew 26:39, 42, 44, “And He went a little farther, and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt.” “He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done.” “And He left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.”

So did the Canaanitish woman in Matthew 15:22, “And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto Him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a demon.” And Solomon also in 1 Kings 8:30, 34, 36, 39, 43, 45, 49, “And hearken Thou to the supplication of Thy servant, and of Thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place: and hear Thou in heaven Thy dwelling place: and when Thou hearest, forgive.” “Then hear Thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of Thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which Thou gavest unto their fathers.” “Then hear Thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of Thy servants, and of Thy people Israel, that Thou teach them the good way wherein they should walk, and give rain upon Thy land, which Thou hast given to Thy people for an inheritance.” “Then hear Thou in heaven, Thy dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart Thou knowest: (for Thou, even Thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men:)” “Hear Thou in heaven Thy dwelling place, and do according to all that

the stranger calleth to thee for: that all people of the earth may know Thy Name, to fear thee, as do Thy people Israel: and that they may know that this house, which I have builded, is called by Thy Name.” “Then hear Thou in heaven their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause.” “Then hear Thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven Thy dwelling place, and maintain their cause.”

But these were not “vain repetitions.” To use beads to check off a fixed number of repetitions, however, **is just mechanical, and misses entirely the true relationship of prayer**, which is that of a subject before his King, a child before his Father. We always pray to God the Father **AND NOT TO ANYONE ELSE**, like Mary, and not even the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ and God the Holy Spirit both pray to God the Father and the believer also prays only to God our Father, if He is our Father by belief in Christ.

Repetitions made with a rosary could have no place in such relationship as we draw near to Him, as our Father. True prayer must always be “in the Spirit,” Ephesians 6:18, which means **the believer must be in fellowship when he prays**, OTHERWISE HIS PRAYER IS NOT HEARD, Psalm 66:18, “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.” Our prayers are not heard even though we are believers, as Peter mentioned in 1 Peter 3, **if there is not domestic tranquility**. So “in the Spirit” also eliminates the mechanical repetitious prayers counting on beads.

Repeating set prayers with a rosary, however, induces an attitude of mind which **regards a mere outside performance as all that is essential**. When we present some request to a man, we do not make a specific number of repetitions, and at the same time check off the number with a rosary. **How much less should we do this in prayer to God our Father.**

“Come boldly to the throne of GRACE to find help in time of need.”

CATHOLIC CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

The Roman Catholic Church claims that “confession is not a human institution of Pope or Council, but a Divine institution observed in the Church from the beginning,” from *“The Question Box,”* page 282. The Council of Trent is quoted as authority, “If anyone denies either that sacramental confession was instituted or is necessary to salvation, by Divine right, or says that the manner of confession secretly to a priest alone, which the Church has observed from the beginning, and doth observe, is alien from the institution and command of Christ and IS A HUMAN INVENTION, LET HIM BE ANATH-EMA.”

Rome cites a few Scriptures in support of her thesis, but none of them make any reference to confession to a priest, with a view to absolution, and no allusions to confession are found in the writings of the early Church until the 3rd century, and most are later than this.

Confession as used in the Roman Church today appears to have sprung from the practice of requiring certain penitents to make public confession of their sins before being readmitted to holy communion. In the nature of things this often proved other than edifying, and so in specific cases the leaders first heard the confession in private, so that the penitent might be instructed in the way his public confession to the whole assembly should be made. Gradually this procedure became customary for all offenses.

In 450 Pope Leo the Great forbade public confession, and private confession to the priest took its place. Private confession must be made after the commission of any serious sin, before taking holy communion, and at the approach of death.

The fourth Lateran Council of 1215 decreed that **at least one confession must be made each year.** BAPTISM TOOK AWAY ORIGINAL SIN AND ALL ACTUAL SIN PRIOR TO BAPTISM, BUT FOR SINS AFTER BAPTISM THERE MUST BE CONFES-

SION AND ABSOLUTION, IF THE SOUL WERE NOT TO BE ETERNALLY LOST. WITHOUT IT NONE COULD BE SAVED. Rome asserts, though without any scriptural authority, that the priest has been appointed by God to judge the sins of men, with power to acquit or condemn. In the exercise of the awesome function he must know all the facts of the case before he can give a true judgment, hence the need for a “good confession” in which nothing has been held back.

“The Question Box,” page 287, “Auricular confession is nowhere expressly mentioned in the Bible, but Christ himself divinely commanded it by giving his apostles the power to remit or retain sins. John 20:23. The sacrament of penance is a judgment, requiring on the part of the priest-judge an accurate knowledge of the nature, number, and circumstances of the sins committed. This can be known only through the penitent himself, who is at once defendant, prosecutor, and witness in this Divine, secret tribunal.” Council of Trent XII, Canon 6,7. IN A WORD, THE SINNER MUST LAY BEAR HIS SOUL TO THE PRIEST, SO THAT HE MAY BE ABLE TO KNOW THE STATE OF HIS CONSCIENCE, AND, CONVINCED OF HIS SORROW, GIVE HIM A FITTING AND ADEQUATE PENANCE,” *“The Question Box,”* page 287.

Now here we have John 20:23 cited as proving that auricular confession was instituted by Christ Himself. Let us examine the verse and its setting. “Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them: and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained,” John 20:23. To whom were these words spoken? The context shows that they were addressed to the disciples, or apostles, as they are elsewhere called. But that is not the whole answer. There is a parallel passage in Luke 24:9, in which we read of the women who came from the tomb, that they returned and “told all these things unto the eleven.” And, please note, “All the rest.” So that others were there besides the apostles. “And re-

turned from the sepulcher, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest."

Again look at verse 33 concerning the two who met the Lord on the road to Emmaus. "And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem and found the eleven gathered together, and," again note, "them that were with them." The earlier company plus the women.

Luke 24:35, 36, "And they told what things were done in the way, and how He was known of them in breaking of bread. And as they thus spake, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you." Luke records more fully than John who were in the company. John records some things added by the Lord which Luke does not mention. The two accounts are not contradictory but complementary, and to get the complete account we must read both. Not only the eleven apostles were there when our Lord spoke the words concerning remitting and retaining sin, **others were there also, and they shared in the benediction and all that followed.** Whatever the words of the commission meant for the apostles, they meant the same for others, too.

Now as to the words our Lord uttered. What is their true meaning? There are two interpretations. Let us take first that held by Rome, expressed quite definitely by the Council of Trent. "Whosoever shall affirm that the word of the Lord and Saviour, receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven, whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained," ARE NOT TO BE UNDERSTOOD OF THE POWER OF FORGIVING AND RETAINING SINS IN A SACRAMENT OF PENANCE, AS THE CATHOLIC CHURCH HAS ALWAYS FROM THE BEGINNING UNDERSTOOD THEM, BUT SHALL RESTRICT THEM TO THE AUTHORITY OF PREACHING THE GOSPEL IN OPPOSITION TO THE INSTITUTION OF THIS SACRAMENT, LET HIM BE ANATHEMA.

The other view is stated with equal clearness in the English prayer book. "He hath given commandment and power to his minis-

ters, to declare and pronounce to this people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins, he pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his holy gospel." The first says that apostles, and by inference their supposed successors, the priests of the Church of Rome today, were given the actual authority to forgive sin. The second says, that the authority is vested in Christ alone, His ministers being empowered to declare His forgiveness to the penitent.

Which is right? Well, the Lord Himself gives us the answer. Luke 24:46-48, "And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things." **The apostles and those who were with them, were to preach remission of sins in His Name.**

Now let us see from the New Testament what the apostles actually did. Did they absolve, or did they preach remission of sins? The answer is plain. **Never once do we read of any one of the apostles hearing someone's confession and granting absolution.** What we do find again and again is that they witnessed to their Lord and preached remission of sins to those who changed their mind about Christ and believed in Him. **Only God can forgive sins.** When the crowd in the temple court on the Day of Pentecost, pricked to the heart, cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" The apostle Peter answered, "Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit," Acts 2:38. The word "for" is because of the remission of sins, literally. **Peter proclaimed the Gospel, and preached forgiveness to those who changed their mind about Christ and trusted in Him as their personal Saviour, THAT WAS ALL.** Indeed, that was all that was possible in the few short hours of that day. It was already 9:00 when Peter began his sermon, and 3,000 turned to the Lord and were added to the Church. **How could 3,000**

have been confessed in the time available? That was the “beginning” of the Christian Church of which Rome speaks.

On this, the first occasion of the preaching of the Gospel after the coming of the Holy Spirit, Peter proclaimed the way of salvation in its simplest possible terms, “Whosoever shall call on the Name of the Lord shall be saved,” Acts 22:21. This simple message was not for that one occasion only, but for all times and all places, for he went on to say, “For the purpose is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call,” Acts 2:39. Making their defense before the High Priest, and the Council, Peter and the other apostles said, “We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses of these things,” Acts 5:29-32.

When the sin of Simon the sorcerer was revealed, Peter does not call him to make a confession to him by says, “Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee,” Acts 8:22.

Preaching at Antioch Paul says, “BE IT KNOWN UNTO YOU THEREFORE, MEN AND BRETHREN, THAT THROUGH THIS MAN IS PREACHED UNTO YOU THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS: AND BY HIM ALL THAT BELIEVE ARE JUSTIFIED FROM ALL THINGS, FROM WHICH YE COULD NOT BE JUSTIFIED BY THE LAW OF MOSES,” Acts 13:38, 39. In reply to the cry of the Philippian jailer, “What must I do to be saved?” Paul does not say “come and confess your sins to me,” but “BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AND THOU SHALT BE SAVED,” Acts 16:31.

The claim of Rome that the words of our Lord recorded in John 20:23 constituted an actual bestowal of authority for the apostles themselves to forgive sins is therefore false, and still less can that authority be claimed by the priesthood or Rome as their so-called

successors. **The claim also that the priest is appointed to judge men’s sin is equally false. God is the Judge of all,** Hebrews 1:23.

John 5:22, 23, 27, “The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son,” not unto the priests, “that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father... And hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man.” Peter says, “And He commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is He which was ordained of God to be the Judge of the quick and dead,” Acts 10:42. Paul preaching in Athens declared, “He,” God, “hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead,” Acts 17:31. The priest is dependent upon the confessional for “an accurate knowledge of the nature, number and the circumstances of the sins committed.” But not so with the Lord. He is omniscient.

Isaiah 11:2-4, “The Spirit shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; And shall make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and HE SHALL NOT JUDGE AFTER THE SIGHT OF HIS EYES, NEITHER REPROVE AFTER THE HEARING OF HIS EARS: BUT WITH RIGHTEOUSNESS SHALL HE JUDGE THE POOR, AND REPROVE WITH EQUITY FOR THE MEEK OF THE EARTH.” David said of the Lord, “O, Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising. Thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, Thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me,” Psalm 139:1-5.

AURICULAR CONFESSION IS BLASPHEMOUS, for it puts a sinful erring man in the place that belongs to God alone. It is morally wrong and shameful, for it forces

not men only, but women and girls also to whisper even their hidden thoughts into the ears of an unmarried man. **It is soul destroying, for it provides a man-made absolution, which cannot really absolve from sin, and which will not avail in the Day of Judgment.**

There is a true confessional, but it is at the feet of the risen Saviour. "Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification," Romans 4:25. The Scripture says, as believers, when we sin, we... "If we confess our sins, HE IS FAITHFUL AND JUST TO FORGIVE US OUR SINS. AND TO CLEANSE US FROM ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS," 1 John 1:9. "He" is God. We confess our sins to Him, and He forgives us our sins and cleanses us from our unknown sins also.

Sin is against the Lord, and our sins as believers have separated us from our Lord, so we must examine ourselves before the Lord, and we must judge ourselves before the Lord that we be not judged with the world.

We are BELIEVER-PRIESTS and we represent ourselves before the Lord. There is still only "one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus," If our sins have injured others, there is a place for confession, as it were, even to men. It is not to a

priest, however, but to the one we have injured, and then not only confession, but reconciliation. The Lord said to the Jews of His day, "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way. First be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift," Matthew 5:23, 24.

The Gospel is what is important in this so-called absolution from sins. "I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of salvation to the Jew first and also to the Greek." We are to do the work of an evangelist, all of us, and when we give out the Gospel, then the person who accepts Christ as personal Saviour, his or her sins are remitted, and if they reject Christ as personal Saviour, then their sins are retained. **The power is not in us hearing confessions as such, but that Christ died for the sins of the whole world, past, present and future, and believing in Him, there is the remission, the forgiveness of sins.** Unbelievers accept Christ as their personal Saviour for salvation, and believers in Christ confess their sins as believers to God, upon which confession of sin, the believer is restored back to fellowship with God in time. **Confession is for believers only to God. ONLY GOD CAN FORGIVE SINS.**

CATHOLIC INDULGENCES

In the 3rd century, when those who had been excommunicated by the Church for apostasy under persecution, sought reinstatement in the Church, the bishops laid down conditions of penance and the performance of certain works of merit as evidence of true repentance. After the completion of these works the penitents might be restored to fellowship regulated steps. Those who superintended this discipline were authorized by the bishops either to shorten or lengthen the probationary period and to reduce or increase the severity of the penance imposed, as circumstances required. Although this was done, no one at the time regarded the punishment imposed as being atoning in its nature, it merely expressed the displeasure and severity of the Church because the offender had brought its good name into dispute.

Nevertheless, from this practice of probation and penance gradually arose the granting of indulgences, the scope of which little by little was extended to cover other sins, and not that of apostasy only. The claim made was that since the Pope was the vicar of Christ, and Head of the Church, **he could draw upon "the treasury of the Church" and use the extra merit of the saints to make good the deficiencies of Catholic believers who were suffering in Purgatory because of sins for which full satisfaction had not been made to God**, just as the Lord, when on Earth had possessed the power to say to the woman taken in adultery, "Neither do I condemn thee. Go and sin no more."

The three essentials for sacramental absolution are laid down as penitence, confession, and satisfaction. The latter called "temporal punishment," is required after absolution has been granted in order to satisfy the justice of God whose laws have been broken. If not lived in this life by fasting and prayers, then it must be paid in Purgatory.

Indulgences apply not to hell, which is irremediable, but to this temporal punishment

in Purgatory. Various indulgences are available, differing in character. There are plenary or complete indulgences, which give exemption from penalties both in this life and in that to come in Purgatory. There are limited indulgences, by which exemption is given for a specified time, ten, 20 or 30 days and so on.

Indulgences differ also as to the place. Universal indulgences are for use in all the churches everywhere. Particular indulgences are for use in specified churches or shrines. Immediate indulgences are of immediate efficacy for those using the rosary or wearing scapular. Personal indulgences are either for oneself or for a specified group. The Pope claims the power to grant any of these indulgences either to the whole church or to any individual member.

In 1903 the Pope gave delegated authority to other priests, permitting cardinals to give indulgences for 200 days, archbishops for 100 days and bishops for 50 days, each in his own diocese, the granting of indulgences is still current practice in the Church of Rome.

Many Catholic historians admit that the use of indulgences has been grossly abused in the past, giving the rise to serious criticism. Thus it was in 1517, when money was needed for the rebuilding of St. Peter's at Rome, Tetzel was sent to sell indulgences in Germany. He openly proclaimed, **"AS SOON AS YOUR MONEY FALLS INTO THE BOX, THE SOUL IS RELEASED FROM PURGATORY."** The Roman Catholic Church may not sell indulgences in the open market today, as once she did, but nevertheless **money received in other ways for indulgences forms a large part of the Church's income.**

Take for instance her many Jubilee years, with the indulgences attached to pilgrimages to Rome. The first of these was instituted by Boniface VIII in 1300. It took the form of a plenary indulgence granted to all the faithful who visited the Roman basilicas

of St. Peter, St. Paul, St. Mary Major, and St. Lateran, and received the sacraments of penance and the holy eucharist. It is stated that in that year more than two million people visited Rome, contributing vast sums of money.

These Jubilee years were to be centennial, but as 1350 drew near, the citizens of Rome besought Pope Clement VI to declare another Jubilee for that year. **Apparently they as well as the Pope had found the Jubilee highly profitable.**

The 50 year interval was reduced to **33** by Urban VI, in 1389, and to **25** by Paul II in 1470, and so has continued until recent times, except that from 1500 and onward the **time of the Jubilee has been extended beyond the year, so that those who could not make the pilgrimage during the actual year could come later and still enjoy its benefits. Those unable to come at all could secure the indulgences by contributing as much money as they were able.**

On August 15, 1953, Pope Pius XII, at the Feast of the Assumption, proclaimed an **extra Jubilee** to commence on December 8, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. This, with the Jubilee of 1950 and the extension of 1951, makes **three Jubilees within five years.** Besides these Jubilees there are special festivals, pilgrimages to various churches and holy places, providing opportunities to accumulate merit, and secure indulgences.

For this travesty of truth Rome seeks to find some support from the Scriptures. She builds her doctrine on Matthew 16:19, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Her false interpretation of this verse lies at the very root of her errors. **She completely disregards the fact that it makes not the slightest reference to Purgatory, nor has anything to do with it.** Even if, for argument's sake, we were to admit that Peter and the other apostles had this authority vested in themselves, **there is no proof that the Pope now has it.**

She also builds her doctrine on 1 Corinthians 5:3-5 and 2 Corinthians 2:10, 11. "For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed. In the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the Spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." "To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ. Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices."

In context the church of Corinth was regarding lightly the sin of one of their members, and Paul was commanding them to excommunicate him. The purpose of this was to bring him to the point of confessing his sin and being restored back to fellowship with God as a believer. As a matter of fact, the church did not excommunicate him, 2 Corinthians 7:6-11, 2 Corinthians 2:10, 11. **But the whole church inflicted the punishment and not the Pope,** and the whole church was exhorted to receive him back after his restoration. The original Greek word here translated "forgive" is the same as that used in Ephesians 4:32, "forgiving one another," meaning to be gracious. It is not the word used in Matthew 2:7, "Who can forgive sins, but God only," or 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." **Now THAT IS ABSOLUTION.**

Paul does not here claim for himself extra merit, to be placed in the "treasury of merit" for the assistance of souls in Purgatory. He was writing from prison where he was suffering for **preaching the Gospel which His Lord had provided at the cost of His suffering on the cross.** The Lord Jesus Christ had told the disciples that they would be hated of all men for His Name's sake. And so indeed it came to pass, with them and with Paul. In 2 Corinthians 11:23-

28 Paul recalls the sufferings he had already endured as a preacher of the Gospel.

Not only is there no support in Scripture for the use of indulgences, but as such it condemns them. Starting from a false premise, fallacy after fallacy is added until the whole doctrine is one gigantic falsehood, false conclusion. It starts with the assumption that our Lord gave to Peter, not authority to preach forgiveness of sins through Christ, as Peter in fact did, but power to forgive sins on his own behalf, though there is not a single record of his ever having done so. It assumes that Peter had the power to pass on an authority which he never possessed to the Pope of today, through a lone line of so-called successors, not a few of them who were notoriously ungodly men.

It assumes that even after priestly absolution, the soul still has to enter a Purgatory, of which the Bible knows nothing, to give "satisfaction" for sins, **which the atoning blood of Christ was not able to provide.** It assumes that man can work out a merit of his own by good works, sufficient not only to cover his own deficiencies, but also to cover the deficiencies of others, **which is a flat contradiction of what the Bible teaches.**

It speaks of a "treasury of merit" and therein it speaks truly, for though the phrase "treasury of merit" is not found in Scripture, the fact is there, for we are told that "Christ by His own blood entered in once into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption for us," Hebrew 9:12. We are therefore invited to "come boldly unto the throne of GRACE to obtain mercy and find GRACE to help in time of need," Hebrews 4:16. **But nowhere in the Bible is there a hint of any merits of the saints or of devout souls on earth being stored there, available to cover the sins of others.** That is a Romish fiction.

It invests the Pope with suppositious powers to dispense suppositious human extra merits, to deliver souls from the fires of a suppositious Purgatory. And all of this is to be granted for money, if not by the open sale of indulgences as in Tetzal's day, then by the intellectual methods of Jubilee years, special festivals and pilgrimages, masses for the dead, for which payment has to be made.

The Lord said, "A rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven," Matthew 19:23. But Rome alters this to mean, "A poor man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven," **for he has not the wealth that Rome requires for her indulgences.** But the Lord said, "The poor have the Gospel preached to them," Matthew 11:5. Almost the last words of the New Testament are "Let him that is athirst come and whomsoever will, let him take the water of life freely," Revelation 22:17.

Note the inconsistency. If Purgatory is to purge away the dross, and "purify" the soul to make it fit to enter heaven, **of what avail can indulgences be for souls in whom that process is not yet complete? If plenary indulgences are really plenary, that is, complete, what need is there to pray for the dead, or pay for the masses for their release after plenary indulgences have been given?**

Peter said, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, and silver and gold, from your vain, empty manner of life, received by tradition from your fathers. BUT WITH THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST, AS OF A LAMB, WITHOUT BLEMISH AND WITHOUT SPOT." These indulgences, and pilgrimages, and money obtaining means of salvation and restoration are called by the Lord "dead works" and "filthy rags in His sight."

CATHOLIC WORKS OF SUPEREROGATION

(Literally, Extra Merit)

According to Roman Catholic teaching it is possible for devout souls not only to make full satisfaction in this life for all the venial sins they have committed, but also to expiate the temporal punishment of mortal sins, the guilt of which had been absolved by confession and absolution, but for which full satisfaction has to be made to the justice of God. This is done by means of acts of mortification, feastings, prayers, and deeds of merit. These deeds of merit may be either material or spiritual.

Material acts of merit including feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, caring for the sick, and those in prison, providing lodging for wayfarers, redeeming captives, and burying the dead.

The spiritual acts are instructing the ignorant, exhorting those who have knowledge, comforting the sorrowful, rebuking those who do wrong, patiently enduring insult, forgiving human frailties, and praying for the living and the dead.

Deeds of merit not only benefit the recipients, but also benefit the givers, for by them they accumulate merit which serves to counterbalance and cover their faults and, if sufficient, give deliverance from the pains of Purgatory hereafter.

More than this, having accomplished this much, the order of good may with zeal and perseverance go on to works of supererogation, to store merit beyond his own personal needs, which will be transferred to what is called, "the treasury of the Church," or "the treasury of merit." This treasury, in which also is stored the merits of Christ in the offering of the mass, and of Mary, the mother of our Lord, and the merit of the saints, is under the authority of the Pope as the vicar of Christ, who can dispense its wealth at his discretion for the benefit of souls yet on earth or already in Purgatory. Masses and such

prayers for the dead can be said "with intention" for such and such a person who has already died, and avail to give him relief. Thus in Roman Catholic churches one constantly sees requests for prayer for the repose of so and so, or notices of masses to be said for such and such a one.

Without exception, all that has been thus set forth has no shadow of foundation in the Word of God, which is our **one final authority**. The doctrine of the mass must be left for another time, but with regard to "the treasury of the Church" and all that appertains to it, something must be said.

The merit of the Lord Jesus Christ by itself, is so full and abundant that it is amply sufficient to meet the needs of all men, past, present and future. 1 John 2:2, "And He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." John 1:29, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world." **The Lord's merit, in all its fullness, is directly available to every seeking soul, and all that it takes is your faith in Him as personal Saviour,** which is independent of anything either a Pope or priest can do.

Colossians 2:8-10, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. FOR IN HIM DWELLETH ALL THE FULLNESS OF THE GODHEAD BODILY. AND YE ARE COMPLETE IN HIM, WHICH IS THE HEAD OF ALL PRINCIPALITY AND POWER." The merits of Jesus Christ, His fullness and redemption, being so abundantly sufficient and available to all seekers, **it is quite unnecessary to ask for the prayers either of Mary or the saints, and to do so is to cast doubt on the willingness and sufficiency of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.**

Hebrews 4:15, 16, "For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities: but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of GRACE, that we may obtain mercy, and find GRACE to help in time of need." **Neither Mary, the mother of the humanity of Jesus Christ, nor any of the saints have any merit of their own, either for themselves or for us.** ALL THE MERIT IS IN CHRIST. The object of our faith is Christ, and in Christ is all the merit, not in anyone other than Christ. Why?

Isaiah 64:6, "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." If a man, after his salvation by faith in the Saviour, faithfully serves the Lord guided by His Word, He will unfailingly receive rewards. Matthew 10:42, "Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."

Hebrew 6:10, "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have showed toward His Name, in that ye have ministered to the saints and do minister." 1 Corinthians 3:14, "If any man's work

abide which he hath built thereon, he shall receive a reward." 2 Timothy 4:7, 8, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing."

The rewards spoken of in these passages proceed from the GRACE of God alone, "For when ye shall done all those things which are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants, we have done that which was our duty to do." **There is no possibility of merit in our relationship with God, still less of added merit. Our rewards, even as our salvation, ARE ALL OF GRACE.** These rewards are received personally, and CANNOT BE PASSED ON TO OTHERS. STILL LESS ARE THEY AT THE DISPOSAL OF POPE OR PRIEST.

All our works will be burned, and those that are fulfilled in the filling of God the Holy Spirit will be rewarded: gold, silver, and precious stones. And those that are performed out of your old sin nature will be burned, but you are still saved, because it is "By GRACE you are saved, through faith and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast."

CATHOLIC BAPTISM

The Roman Catholic Church places strong emphasis on sacraments, and **puts baptism in the very forefront of these as being essential to salvation.** So vital is it that, whereas ordinarily only a priest can perform the rite, in cases of emergency a layman may administer it where no priest is available.

In the booklet "*What Catholics Believe*," by the Catholic Truth Society, the case is cited of an English soldier in India, who used to take his morning walk by the seaside to baptize the number of infants left there to be washed away by the tide, with the comment, he could not save their earthly life, but he could bring them to eternal life. Another case mentioned was that of a child left in charge of a baby brother. The baby was suddenly taken with a fit, and the child baptized him. The conclusion stated was that all should know how to baptize so that we might be ready for a similar emergency.

Romanism teaches that the souls of unbaptized infants at death go to a place somewhere between heaven and hell called Limbo, there to spend eternity in a condition of natural happiness. Not having sinned themselves, they do not go to hell, but since they have the stain of original sin not washed away by baptism, **they can never enter heaven to enjoy the beatific vision of God. Unbaptized adults at death go straight to hell, since in addition to original sin, they have actual sin, sins of their own committing.**

As for unbaptized infants, first let it be said that **Limbo is a figment of Romish imagination, there being no support in Scripture for the evidence of such a place.** It cannot be "Hades," the grave, or place of departed spirits, translated "hell" in the English Bible, for that is temporary only, since in Revelation 20:13, 14 we learn that "Death and hell," Hades, "delivered up the dead which were in them, and THEY WERE JUDGED EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO THEIR WORKS. And death and hell were

cast into the Lake of Fire. This is the second death." **There is no room here for a place of eternal existence in a state of natural happiness, outside of heaven itself.** Heaven remains, and hell, the Lake of Fire, wherein are cast all those **whose names are not written in the Book of Life. Moreover, no mention whatsoever is made of baptism in this connection either for infant or adult.**

The dictionary meaning of the word "sacrament" is "a religious ceremony or act, regarded as an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual GRACE." The essence of this is that **a sacrament is symbolic. Rome does not accept this definition,** however. To her, baptism is much more than a symbol of GRACE already received. It is the rite which itself imparts saving GRACE, so that a baptized person is saved and an unbaptized one is lost.

Thus to continue the quotation from the booklet already mentioned. "All good come to us by the precious blood... IT IS BY THE SACRAMENTS THAT THE MERITS OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD ARE APPLIED TO OUR SOULS. THEY ARE THUS THE CHIEF MEANS OF OUR SALVATION. FOR THE SACRAMENTS ARE NOT MERELY SIGNS OF GRACE, **THEY GIVE THE GRACE THEY SIGNIFY....** A LITTLE WATER IS Poured ON THE BODY, AND THE BABY'S SOUL IS CLEANSED FROM ORIGINAL SIN," page 33.

"BAPTISM IS A SACRAMENT WHICH CLEANSSES US FROM ORIGINAL SIN, MAKES US CHRISTIANS, MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH, AND HEIRS OF HEAVEN. BAPTISM ALSO FORGIVES ACTUAL SINS, that is the sins which we ourselves commit, AND TAKES AWAY ALL PUNISHMENT DUE TO THEM, which it is received in proper disposition by those who have been guilty of actual sin," page 35.

The language employed is clear and unequivocal. But does it agree with the teaching

of Scripture? What does the Word say? What does the Bible say? What does the mind of Christ say? **EMPHATICALLY NOT! It is not only not found in Scripture, BUT IT DIRECTLY CONTRADICTS WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS.**

CAN THE POURING OF A LITTLE WATER ON THE BODY CLEANSE THE SOUL FROM SIN? "Though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before Me, saith the Lord God," Jeremiah 2:22. "Pilate, took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying I am innocent of the blood of this just Person," Matthew 27:24. Did Pilate's handwashing cleanse away his guilt? No, nor can water in a baptistery or fount avail. **But what water cannot do THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST CAN EFFECT.** "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin," 1 John 1:7.

Can baptism make us Christians? Children of God? And heirs to heaven? Again the answer is NO. **Only the work of God the Holy Spirit, wrought in us as we receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour by faith can accomplish this.** John 1:11-13, "He," Jesus Christ, "came unto His own," the Jewish people, whose King and Messiah He was, "and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name, which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

Note in this passage that RECEIVE and BELIEVE are here used as synonyms. **True belief** is more than a creed, and more than a mental assent to that creed, **it is an active thing. It receives.** 1 John 5:11-13, "And this is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. THESE THINGS HAVE I WRITTEN UNTO YOU THAT BELIEVE ON THE NAME OF THE SON OF GOD: THAT YE MAY KNOW THAT YE HAVE ETERNAL LIFE, AND THAT YE MAY BELIEVE ON THE NAME OF THE

SON OF GOD." **Could language be more plain and straightforward?** He who has the Son receives Him by faith, has eternal life. And the reverse is equally clear.

John 3:36, "HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT THE SON shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." John 3:18, "HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT is condemned already. BECAUSE HE HATH NOT BELIEVED IN THE NAME OF THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD." **No baptismal rite, by whomsoever performed, can regenerate a soul, and give him that eternal life which alone can make him a child of God and an heir of heaven.** If it could, Paul would not have written, "CHRIST SENT ME NOT TO BAPTIZE, BUT TO PREACH THE GOSPEL," 1 Corinthians 1:17. Nor could Paul say, "Thank God I baptized only Crispus and Gaius." And the thief on the cross, unbaptized, could not have entered into Paradise with the Lord Jesus Christ. "Today thou shalt be with Me in Paradise."

In Scripture we find that regeneration is brought about by two things:

1. The Truth of the Gospel.

2. The power of God the Holy Spirit. "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who BELIEVETH: to the Jew first and also to the Greek," Romans 1:16. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever, and this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you," 1 Peter 1:23-25. "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God, that which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit," John 3:5, 6.

The Romish Church immediately seizes upon the word "water" in verse 5 of the previous Scripture and claims that it refers to baptism. But **water is used many ways in Scripture**, and this use of **water is THE WORD OF GOD**, "the water of the washing of the Word," Ephesians 5. In view of all other passages we have already considered,

to claim this word as a proof of baptismal regeneration cannot be allowed. Let the Scriptures interpret the Scriptures.

Ephesians 5:25, 26, "Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for it. That He might sanctify and CLEANSE IT WITH THE WASHING OF THE WATER BY THE WORD." Romans 10:17, "So that faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God." **It is by hearing the Word of God that faith is created, the faith that opens the mind to the waiting Saviour, and He enters and the soul is born again.**

The actual regeneration is the work of God the Holy Spirit. John 3:8, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: SO IS EVERY ONE THAT IS BORN OF THE SPIRIT." **The work of God the Holy Spirit in regeneration is a miracle of GRACE**, imparting new spiritual life to the soul once dead in trespasses and sins. This work of the Holy Spirit brings its own evidence as does the invisible wind, whose sound we hear and whose coolness we feel, but this is evidence that cannot be refuted.

Galatians 5:22-24, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."

The certain conclusion from all the Scriptures we have considered is that the **rite of baptism does not forgive sin, nor does it impart eternal life, and make the soul and heir of heaven.** Yet it is unquestionably a rite commanded by our Lord for believers. When does it come in and what purpose does it serve?

The answer to the first question is that **baptism comes AFTER SALVATION.** There may be a considerable lapse of time between the two, or the one may follow the other so closely as to be almost indivisible. But when the two are as close as this, it is **always faith in Christ that saved us, NOT the baptismal rite.**

Acts 2:41, "They that gladly received the Word were baptized." Acts 8:12, "When they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the Name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." Acts 8:13, "Then Simon himself believed also. And... was baptized." Acts 8:36-38, "AND THE EUNUCH SAID, SEE, HERE IS WATER; WHAT DOTH HINDER ME TO BE BAPTIZED? AND PHILIP SAID, IF THOU BELIEVEST WITH ALL THINE HEART, THOU MAYEST. AND HE ANSWERED AND SAID, I BELIEVE THAT JESUS CHRIST IS THE SON OF GOD. AND HE COMMANDED THE CHARIOT TO STAND STILL: AND THEY WENT DOWN BOTH INTO THE WATER, BOTH PHILIP AND THE EUNUCH; AND HE BAPTIZED HIM." This eunuch accepted Christ as his personal Saviour based on what he read in Isaiah 53.

Acts 9:18, "And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized." Acts 10:47, 48, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Spirit as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the Name of the Lord." Acts 16:29-34, "Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas. And brought them out, and said, Sirs, WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED? AND THEY SAID, BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AND THOU SHALT BE SAVED. AND THY HOUSE. AND THEY SPAKE UNTO HIM THE WORD OF THE LORD, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes: and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, AND REJOICED, BELIEVING IN GOD WITH ALL HIS HOUSE."

Acts 18:8, "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house: and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized."

Now there are several answers to the question. "What end does baptism serve?"

1. Baptism is an act of acknowledging that you are a believer in Christ. In 1 Corinthians 10:2 we read that the children of Israel were all baptized unto Moses, were all identified with Moses, literally. So the Christian is baptized into Christ, and baptized or identified with Christ, union with Christ. "And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea."

2. Baptism sets forth the inward spiritual cleansing already received. Acts 2:38, 41, "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about 3000 souls." Literally, "Peter said unto them 'Change your mind, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ because of the remission of sins'... Then they that gladly received his word were baptized." Having received Peter's testimony concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, they were baptized as indicating the cleansing they had received.

3. Baptism sets forth the believer's union with Christ in His death, and resurrection and the believer's living in newness of life. Romans 6:1-4, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that GRACE may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Colossians 2:13, "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you

all trespasses." Colossians 3:1-4, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory."

Water baptism does not save. THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT DOES, AND THIS OCCURS AT THE POINT OF SALVATION. That passage is found in 1 Corinthians 12:13, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

Water baptism, therefore, is one of two rituals in the Church Age which are FOR BELIEVERS ONLY, signifying that we have accepted Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour. The other ritual in the Church Age is common: The Lord's Table, which also means we have already accepted Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour. **Both are a challenge to the believer to live the Spirit-filled life.** The Spirit-filled life is simply by following the command of 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Having confessed our sins as believers, to God, we are then filled with the Holy Spirit and we can walk in newness of life. Galatians 5:22, 23 is manifested in our lives and we produce the character of Jesus Christ and we have an impact in this life. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

CATHOLIC IMAGES

A prominent feature of Roman Catholicism is the worship of the images found in every church. There are images of Christ, of the virgin Mary, of the apostles, and very many saints, all set up as objects of adoration, with the usual adjuncts of worship placed conveniently nearby.

We search in vain for any precedent for this, either in the pages of the New Testament, or in Christian writings of the early centuries. There are evidences of a fairly early use of Christian symbols in the catacombs: a lion or lamb to represent the Lord Jesus Christ, a dove for the Holy Spirit, a boat for the Church, an anchor for hope, a palm leaf for victory, and so on. These were also used on seal rings and as decorations in the houses of Christians, in place of the idolatrous symbols of heathen days.

Toward the end of the 3rd century, pictures came into vogue as ornamentation for the walls of Christian places of worship. And in the 5th century they appear to have been used as a means of instruction for the ignorant in place of literature which they could not read for themselves.

From this, with the decline of spiritual life characteristic of the time, it was an easy step to venerating and worshipping them as being intrinsically holy. The practice was legalized by the Council of Nicea, in 787, which anathematized those who opposed. Nevertheless, the movement was resisted in many places for years, until in 1502 the Council of Trent issued a further decree permitting the placing of images in churches, and allowing their veneration, not as objects of worship in themselves, but as a way of worshipping those whom they represented, with the worship of the object being transferred to the person.

Rome justifies image worship by saying that the prohibition of Exodus 20 applies only to images of heathen deities. To bolster up this idea, she combines the first and second commandments of the Deca-

logue, making them one, or else omitting the second commandment, and splits the tenth commandment into two, to make the requisite number. **But no juggling with words can alter the force of God's commandments.**

Exodus 20:4, 5, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the Earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me."

These commandments contain two prohibitions which are unqualified and cover every form of false worship, irrespective of the material of which the image was made, or whether it was supposed to be a representation of Jehovah, as was probably the case both with the golden calf Aaron made in the wilderness, and those set up by Jeroboam for the northern kingdom of Israel at a later date. That the Decalogue prohibits not only the worship of images, but anything which usurps the place of God, is made clear in Colossians 3:4, "Covetousness, which is idolatry."

Here is the commentary of Moses on these commandments: Deuteronomy 4:15-19, "Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves: for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire: Lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female, The likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air, The likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the Earth: And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to

worship them, and serve them, which the Lord thy God hath divided unto all the nations under the whole heaven.”

Here it is clear that God forbids worship of likenesses of Himself under any form whatsoever, and the prohibition does not apply only to heathen deities. In her image worship, Rome is acting in plain disobedience to God’s express command. There is no need to ask whether worship so offered can find acceptance.

For the worship of the cross and crucifix, Rome appeals to John 19:37, “They shall look on Me whom they pierced.”

A recent commentary says, “This verse foretells the use of the crucifix to move men to repent of their sins and love the wounds of the Lord. Some of the wicked men who looked on Jesus on the cross were smitten with grief and repented, as have many more of later generations.”

Repenting of your sins and loving the wounds of Christ doesn’t save you. Jesus Christ died on the cross not to have men pity Him, as He went to the cross bearing the heavy cross upon His body already torn and bleeding from the cruel scourging.

Luke 23:27-29, “There followed Him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented Him. But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave milk.” The coming destruction of Jerusalem was going to plunge them into a welter of agony that would be greater even than the physical sufferings of the cross.

Our Lord’s death had a far deeper purpose than to move men to pity Him. It was the price of our redemption, and the only way that God’s GRACE could reach us.

After His resurrection we find Jesus Christ saying to His disciples, Luke 24:26, 27, “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? And be-

ginning at Moses and all the prophets. He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.” In the upper room He showed them His hands and His feet. So Thomas was told, “Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side and be not faithless, but believing.” He did this however, not to move the disciple to pity, but for the purpose of certain identification, that they might be sure and believe that He was Himself, and not a disembodied spirit, His resurrection, physical body.

The accounts of the Lord’s crucifixion are given in all the Gospels with the greatest reserve about the physical sufferings He must have endured. About the only words that refer to that suffering were “I thirst.” **In their preaching of the Gospel the apostles hardly made a reference to our Lord’s physical sufferings to move men’s emotions. The salvation that His death brought was their there, and the strong emphasis was always upon His glorious resurrection as the seal of it. The death, burial and resurrection and Jesus Christ is the Gospel that saves. The physical suffering of Christ does not save. It is His spiritual death that saves. HE DIED TWICE ON THE CROSS. His physical death was a manifestation that His work of salvation was completed on the cross.**

Representations of Christ’s death on the cross first appeared in the 5th century, to set forth pictorially what was recorded in the Gospels, but there was no attempt at studied realism. That tendency did not appear until the 11th century, and was not developed until the 17th century. A Spanish artist, casting away conventional restraints, portrayed the death agonies of the Lord and set the pattern for the centuries that followed, whether the representations were in painting or in sculpture.

These attempted realistic representations of Christ’s agony on the cross are characteristic of Roman Catholicism, **which makes its strongest appeal to the emotions.** The crucifixes and calvaries found in such abundance in many Roman Catholic lands all

tend to obscure the fact that our Lord's sufferings and atoning death are finished and over, that He rose from the dead and today is seated at the Father's right hand. HE IS NO LONGER ON THE CROSS. They tend to overshadow the fact that our risen victorious Lord ever liveth to make intercession for us, and is our Advocate in heaven.

The Roman Catholic Church has done with the cross what the Israelites of Hezekiah's day did with the brazen serpent which Moses had made in the wilderness. The children of Israel had a true relic, 700 years old, commemorative of the great GRACE of healing which their forefathers had by its means. But now it had become a snare to them and the thing which had been a foreshadowing of Christ's sufferings on the cross had been perverted into an idol. Hezekiah dealt with this sin ruthlessly. In spite of its antiquity, its historical associations, and its spiritual significance, he broke the brazen serpent to pieces, calling it NEHUSHTAN, a thing of brass.

2 Kings 18:3, 4, "And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that David his father did. He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it NEHUSH-

TAN." John 3:14, 15, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

When our Lord returns to this Earth, as He will in power and great glory, **He will utterly abolish, not only the idols of the heathen, but also the images, the idols in the churches, wherever they are found.**

Isaiah 2:18-22, "And the idols He shall utterly abolish. And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the Earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of His majesty, when He ariseth to shake terribly the Earth. In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats: To go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of His majesty, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth. Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?"

When Christ comes back to this Earth to rule and reign, the first thing that He removes from this Earth is religion and the father of religion, Satan. You cannot have perfect environment, a Millennial situation while religion still exists on the face of the Earth. RELIGION GOES WHEN CHRIST COMES

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND RELICS

Rome venerates, but we have seen this is really worship, a vast number of relics. Most of these are supposed to be the bones of saints. But besides these, there are many others, as for instance, parts of the tables of the Law given to Moses, the rods of Moses and Aaron, the table at which Jesus Christ and His disciples sat for the Last Supper, many pieces of the true cross, thorns from the crown He wore, the nails from which He hung, the board upon which the superscription was written, the sponge which the Roman soldier dipped in the vinegar, the head of the spear which was thrust into his side, the outer and inner garments, His shroud, and the heads of John the Baptist, Peter and Paul.

Although many of these have been worshipped for hundreds of years, obviously many, if not all of them, are spurious. The parts of "the true cross" so venerated, if put together, would far exceed the possible bulk of the original cross. Of the three or four nails which might have been used at the crucifixion, 14 are preserved. Only one spear was thrust into our Lord's side. Today there are four. Jesus Christ had only one seamless robe. The Church of Rome preserves three. It also has two heads of John the Baptist, one at Rome and the other Amien. The Catholic Encyclopedia and other books admit that many of the relics are spurious, but nevertheless they are still kept for worship.

Various excuses for this are made:

1. The great difficulty of deciding which are true and which are spurious.
2. In gathering out the false, some that are true might be rejected and dishonored. So let them alone, as the Lord said of the tares and the wheat.
3. If the Church formally acknowledges that certain relics are spurious, a measure of disgrace and reproach is unavoidable.

4. "It matters little if the relic be not authentic, for the reverence we pay is to the saints," *The Question Box*, page 373.

5. The layman says, "Since it appertains to the Popes and bishops to decide matters of faith and practice, we can only leave the matter in their hands."

So Rome continues to countenance what she herself acknowledges is partly false. And in doing so sponsors a worship which is forbidden in the very Scriptures whose Divine authority she acknowledges. She does, however, seek to find support from the Bible for the veneration of relics, but with less than poor success:

1. The bones of Joseph, for instance. Exodus 13:19, "And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you: and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you." Sold as a slave into Egypt, Joseph had spent all but the first 17 of the 110 of his life in that land. Through those years, first of suffering and oppression, and then of greatness and glory as viceroy, he had never let go of his faith in the Lord nor lost the desire to return to the Land promised to his forefathers.

As the day of death approached, he said to his brethren, Genesis 50:24, 25, "And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which He sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence."

All through the following years of Egyptian bondage, Joseph's embalmed body remained among the Israelites as a reminder of God's promise of deliverance and of Joseph's faith. "A Bible in a coffin." When the day of deliverance came, Moses brought it out according to the oath.

But we never read that it was worshipped or “venerated after the Romish fashion. It was only mentioned three times: first at the taking of the oath, next when the wilderness journey began, and lastly when it was duly interred at Shechem, Joshua 24:32. Never again through the whole history of the Israelite nation is any reference made to the bones of Joseph. **Had it been God’s intention to preserve them for relics of the Church, they would not have passed so silently off the scene.** Joseph’s bones were their Bible during that period of bondage. A promise from the Lord.

2. The Church of Rome cites the case of Elisha, whose bones were actually connected with a miracle, as attested by Scripture. “And Elisha died, and they buried him, and the bands of the Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the year. And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of men, and they cast the man into the sepulcher of Elisha, and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet.” 2 Kings 13:20, 21.

Now the first thing we observe in this brief account is that **the power was not attributed to Elisha’s bones. The power to raise the dead belongs to God alone.** 1 Samuel 2:6, “The Lord killeth, and maketh alive: He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up.”

The second is that the case is unique. In the whole compass of Scripture there is no other occasion where God used the bones of a dead man to work a miracle.

In the third place, the people of Israel did not remove Elisha’s bones from the tomb and put them in a casket to be worshipped, **nor did they build a shrine at the tomb and make it a place of pilgrimage.** No other dead bodies touched those bones and came to life. Nor did people come there to pray for the sick. As with Joseph’s bones, we never hear of them again.

It may reasonably be asked why God used Elisha’s bones in this way. To that question no certain answer can be given, for

the reason is not positively revealed. **God is sovereign and can work miracles as He wills, with or without visible means.** But the context of the passage supplies a possible reason. It is in close juxtaposition with two things. Immediately before this account we have Elisha’s prophecy uttered just prior to his death, that the invading Syrians should be repulsed three times and no more. Immediately after comes the record of the fulfillment of that prophecy. The miracle might well have been wrought to remind backsliding Israel that though Elisha had passed on, God was still there watching over His Word, through Elisha, to perform it. Many times in Scripture a prophet was spread over a sick or dead person and by identification that way with the prophet, the person who was sick or dead revived.

3. Rome quotes two cases of healing in the New Testament by unusual means as an argument for the use of relics.

A. “Inasmuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.” Acts 5:15, 16. This account need not astonish us, for the Lord in commissioning the 12 and the 70 had given them powers of healing, and He Himself healed sometimes with means, though more often without.

B. “And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.” Acts 19:11, 12. Peter’s shadow could hardly be kept as a relic, but the handkerchiefs and aprons might have been. They were not, however, so far as the record goes, nor were any further miracles wrought by them.

When Peter and John healed the lame man at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, and all the people ran together wondering, Peter said unto them, “Ye men of Israel, why mar-

vel ye at this? Or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?... His name," Jesus, "through faith in His Name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by Him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all," Acts 3:12-16. Peter went on then to preach Christ as the One who could forgive sins.

Genuine relics have had a place, not only in national history, but also in the Christian life, **as reminders of what God had done, that our faith may be strengthened thereby.** God commanded Moses to put a pot of manna in the ark of the covenant to remind the Israelites of his provision through their 40 years of wilderness travel. Exodus 16:33, 34, "And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the Lord, and be kept for your generations. As the Lord commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept."

He also commanded him to place Aaron's rod which budded before the ark as a memorial of His choice of Aaron as the high priest. Numbers 17:10, "And the Lord said unto Moses, Bring Aaron's rod again before the Testimony, to be kept for a token

against the rebels: and thou shalt quite take away their murmurings from Me, that they die not." Hebrews 9:4, "Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant." But the Israelites did not worship these things. For them to have done so would have been on a par with the worship of the brazen serpent, which Hezekiah broke in pieces and called "a thing of brass" because of their idolatry.

There were bonafide miracles and signs given, and also relics to remind the people of God's faithfulness, and of His promises and His Word to them. After the completed Canon of Scripture came in 96 A.D. there was no longer any need of special temporary gifts and/or relics because we have God's completed thought to the human race in writing.

That is why Christ said, "I HAVE PLACED MY WORD ABOVE MY NAME." And that is why He said on several occasions, "MAN SHALL NOT LIVE BY BREAD ALONE, BUT BY EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDED OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD."

SAINTS

We have already examined the worship of images and relics, justified by the Church of Rome on the ground that the adoration presented is directed not toward the visible objects, but to the personalities they represent. **We have found these pleas to be false, and the worship to be idolatrous and offensive to the Lord.** We now go a step further to see if the worship of saints in heaven, independent of any visible representation, is permissible.

As a first step we need to be clear about our terminology, for a saint in the New Testament sense of the word is something entirely different from a Roman Catholic saint. **The word means “to be set apart.”** This is not a prefix to a name, **but a reference to every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. And these saints in the New Testament were alive, living on the Earth when the name is given to them.** If we looked at some of the passages referring to them, we shall find that they were living in various cities and countries.

THERE WERE SAINTS IN JERUSALEM. Acts 9:13, “Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, HOW MUCH EVIL HE HATH DONE TO THY SAINTS AT JERUSALEM.”

THERE WERE SAINTS AT ROME. Romans 1:7, “TO ALL THAT BE IN ROME, BE-LOVED OF GOD, CALLED SAINTS, GRACE to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

THERE WERE SAINTS IN LYDIA. Acts 9:32, “And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all, HE CAME DOWN ALSO THE SAINTS WHICH DWELT AT LYDIA.”

THERE WERE SAINTS AT JOPPA. Acts 9:41, “And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, AND WHEN HE HAD CALLED THE SAINTS AND WIDOWS, PRESENTED HER ALIVE.”

THERE WERE SAINTS IN CORINTH. 1 Corinthians 1:2, “Unto the Church of God

which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, CALLED TO BE SAINTS, with all that in every place call upon the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their’s and our’s.”

THERE WERE SAINTS IN ACHAIA. 2 Corinthians 1:1, “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the Church of God which is at Corinth, WITH ALL THE SAINTS WHICH ARE IN ALL ACHAIA.”

THERE WERE SAINTS IN EPHESUS. Ephesians 1:1, “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God TO THE SAINTS WHICH ARE IN EPHESUS AND TO THE FAITHFUL IN CHRIST JESUS.”

THERE WERE SAINTS IN PHILIPPI. Philippians 1:1, “Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, TO ALL THE SAINTS IN CHRIST JESUS WHICH ARE AT PHILIPPI, with the bishops and deacons.”

THERE WERE SAINTS IN COLOSSE. Colossians 1:2, “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God and Timotheus our brother, TO THE SAINTS AND FAITHFUL BRETHREN IN CHRIST WHICH ARE AT COLOSSE.”

These saints addressed here were members of the churches in all these places, and of course, in many places besides these which are specifically mentioned here.

The word “saint” is in the Greek New Testament the word HAGIOS, which means to be set apart. **They were formerly unbelievers, who were lost and without Christ, and without hope and without eternal life, and they became saints, or set apart ones, unto God by accepting Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour.** The word “saint” is a term for a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ connoting the principle of **eternal security, set apart unto God at the moment of salvation and set apart unto God for all eternity.** They were sanctified, again the word “set apart,” and they were justified in

the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ by the Spirit of God.

1 Corinthians 6:11, "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." They had been redeemed by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and all their sins had been forgiven them according to the riches of His GRACE.

Ephesians 1:7, "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His GRACE." They had been accepted in God the Father's well-beloved Son. Ephesians 1:6, "To the praise of the glory of His GRACE, where in He hath made us accepted in the Beloved."

They were in union with Christ. Ephesians 1:1, "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are a Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus." And in Christ they were once a far off and they had been made nigh. Ephesians 2:13, "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."

Yet they were not perfect in themselves, i.e., saintly. They were believers in Christ, but they still failed as believers in time. The two letters to the Corinth Church reveal that these self-same saints sometimes had grievous defects, falling far short of the sainthood or separateness from sin to which they had been called. There were division among them, lawsuits, disorderly worship, and one case even of shocking immorality with which the Church had to deal. Most of the other churches were better than this, but none were "perfect." **So God, in His matchless GRACE and wisdom, give gifts to His Church "FOR THE PERFECTING OF THE SAINTS, unto the work of ministering."** Ephesians 4:12.

According to the teaching of the **New Testament, saints are not a special class of Christians who have attained to what Rome calls a "heroic condition of holiness" from a sort of spiritual aristocracy**

in heaven, enrolled in a special catalog by papal authority, who must be "venerated" and invoked in prayer.

Far different from the New Testament concept of Roman Catholic sainthood. Their saints consist of only those who have died, and are supposedly living in heaven. **Their "saint" in its meaning of "separation" is an anomaly, since in heaven there is no sin from which to be separated.** Roman Catholic sainthood follows beatification of canonization. **Beatification is a decree where veneration is permitted in certain areas. Canonization is world-wide application, and the veneration is obligatory.** For several centuries, bishops decided who was a saint. Then for another long period the power of decision became a prerogative of archbishops, until at the end of the 11th century the Pope alone could beatify or canonize, and then only after careful scrutiny of the records of the life and sanctity of the one so to be honored. This was generally done long after the person concerned had passed away.

As a last stage, in 1634 regulations for canonization were officially promulgated. **Both beatification and canonization demanded the expenditure of very large sums of money for all the procedure to be followed. For canonization it was necessary for the one under consideration to have PERFORMED AT LEAST FOUR AUTHENTICATED MIRACLES.**

The highest of saints is the virgin Mary, to whom a degree of veneration or worship is accorded superior to all others. Then follow the apostles, next evangelists of the first three centuries who suffered martyrdom, among them John the baptist, though the Bible says about John the baptist, "John did no miracle," John 10:41.

After these the number increases rapidly, including all sorts of men and women, recluses, theologians, prelates, Popes, kings and humble folk to whom particular days were assigned in the calendar when they were specially invoked, **UNTIL ALL SAINTS DAY, which was provided for those who could not find a place elsewhere.** The great majority of those inscribed in the cata-

log of saints are celibate, with married people in a small minority.

Rome's idea of sanctity not always coinciding with the New Testament standards. **Saints are not man made. That is God's prerogative. God is the only One who forgives sins and appoints the believer as a saint.** ALL BELIEVERS IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST ARE SAINTS AND PRIESTS. Peter brought this out himself. 1 Peter 2:9, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy, HAGIOS, saintly, nation, a peculiar, protected people, that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."

We are all in the "Book of Life" at physical birth, and we are blotted out of God's "Book of Life" when we die rejecting Christ as our personal Saviour. We do nothing to become a saint, nor can anyone make us a saint, but we can do something not to become a saint, and that is rejecting Christ as our personal Saviour.

We need not be concerned about deciding who among the Roman Catholic saints in the "catalog" are true New Testament saints, for the Word of God says, "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts, and then shall every one have praise of God," 1 Corinthians 4:5.

That command applies to us as to those who are called Pope's, but one thing is certain, **every Roman Catholic "saint" who is really in heaven today is there not because of his own heroic sanctity, nor by papal judicial decisions and proclamations, but because like us He has trusted in Jesus Christ as his own personal Saviour.**

Philippians 3:9, "We are found in Him, not having our own righteousness, but that which is through the faith in Christ, the righteousness of God by faith." "Not by works of righteousness which we have done..." "Not of works..." "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags in His sight."

All are terms expressing man's inability to canonize anyone.

Rome also says that the intercession of her saints on our behalf has special efficacy because they are nearer to God than ordinary Christian people. But that also is not true. **Every true believer in Christ is a saint, and he is "IN CHRIST"** as we have seen already from the book of Ephesians. We are IN CHRIST, as members are in His body. We are IN CHRIST as the branches are in the vine, part of the vine, so that the vine would not be complete without them. "I am the vine," Christ, "Ye are the branches," John 15:3.

WHAT DO THE SCRIPTURES SAY ABOUT PRAYING TO THOSE WHO HAVE DEPARTED THIS LIFE?

1. Prayer is a form of worship. The command of God, reiterated by the Lord Jesus Christ, is "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

2. The worship of saints, or prayer to them is nowhere commanded in Scripture.

3. There is no single instant of invocation of the saints, in either the Old or New Testament.

4. Neither Peter with Cornelius, Acts 10:25, nor Paul with Barnabas with the people of Lystra, Acts 14:15, would allow these men to bow down to them.

It is different with the Lord Jesus Christ. The leper worshipped Him, Matthew 8:2. So did Jarius, Matthew 9:18. And the disciples after the storm on the lake, Matthew 14:33. And the Canaanitish woman, Matthew 15:22. He received their worship. If Peter and Paul and Barnabas would not receive worship on earth, why should they do so in heaven?

5. Concerning believers, Paul says, they are those who "in every place call upon the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours," 1 Corinthians 1:2. He does not refer them as "those who call upon Mary or the saints."

6. It is useless to pray to the saints.

A. Departed saints are neither omnipresent nor omniscient, to hear men's prayers everywhere. To pray to them is to

ascribe to them attributes which belong to the Lord alone, and it discounts the value and necessity of prayer to God the Father Himself.

B. There is no evidence that the saints have power to help, even if they could hear and know our needs. Omniscient and omnipresent.

C. Our Lord only once referred to prayer to a saint in Paradise, but that prayer came not from Earth, but from Hades. Dives prayed to Abraham, first for himself, and then for his brethren still on Earth. But both prayers were rejected. Luke 16:23-31. It is interesting that believers in heaven rejoice over one person who accepts Jesus Christ as personal Saviour on this Earth. **And in Hades, the unbeliever prays that the unbeliever should accept Christ as Saviour so that they don't come to where the unbeliever is in Hades.**

D. After Samuel's death, Saul sought his help, because God had not answered. 1 Chronicles 10:13, 14, "Saul died for this transgression which he committed against the Lord, EVEN AGAINST THE WORD OF THE LORD, WHICH HE KEPT NOT, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to inquire of it, and inquired not of the Lord: therefore He slew him." **To invoke the dead is not only useless, but it is sin.**

7. We do not need the prayers of saints, even if they were available.

A. To seek their help is to imply that Jesus Christ is unwilling to save and bless men, and needs to be persuaded. **It is derogatory to His GRACE and love.**

B. The Name of Jesus Christ is the only plea we need before God. **Jesus Christ is the all prevailing Name.**

C. Peter in Acts 2:21 and Paul in Romans 10:13 both said, "Whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved."

D. The ministry of Jesus Christ, our High Priest, is all sufficient. Hebrews 4:15, 16, "For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our in-

firmities: but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of GRACE, that we may obtain mercy, and find GRACE to help in time of need."

E. Jesus Christ Himself excluded every other mediator. "I am the way, the Truth and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by Me," John 14:6.

Rome's catalog of saints may have an antiquarian interest here on Earth, **but there is not a shred of evidence that it has the least validity in heaven. There is nothing in Scripture to support the idea of a group of specially holy souls having an access to God beyond what every believer enjoys.** There is nothing to suggest that they can either hear our prayers, or help us by their intercession. **Attempted contact with them is forbidden.**

Since we have Christ as our High Priest, always interceding on our behalf, both willing and able to come to our relief, we need no other mediator. "For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him, Amen, unto the glory of God by us," 2 Corinthians 1:20. "Trust in Him at all times; ye people, pour out your hearts before Him: God is a refuge for us," Psalm 62:8. "O Thou that hearest prayer, unto Thee shall all flesh come," Psalm 65:2. "In everything by prayer and supplication with prayer and thanksgiving let your requests be known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall stand guard over your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus," Philippians 4:6, 7.

Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are instructed to offer our prayers to God the Father only, "Our Father which art in heaven," **in the power of the Holy Spirit, praying in the Spirit, and in the Name of Jesus Christ.** We never pray to even Jesus Christ or God the Holy Spirit. **They both also pray to God the Father for us, even when we don't know what to pray.**

Remember, it is a throne of GRACE and not works

THE PAPACY AND SOCIAL ACTION

Our Lord gave His disciples a test by which to distinguish false teachers from that which is true, "the spirit of error and the spirit of Truth." He said, "By their fruits ye shall know them." Matthew 7:20. The test has three characteristics. It is simple. Every man can use it and apply it for himself, be he high or low, wise or simple. It is universal in its application, for all places, all people, and for all times. It is reliable. The test cannot go wrong, "For a good tree brings forth good fruit, and a bad tree brings forth bad fruit."

The test not only applies to people, but to churches, and as we apply it to the Church of Rome, we are reminded of our Lord's parable of the mustard seed, which grew into a tree so big that the birds of the air lodged in its branches. There are many birds in the branches of some churches.

The Church of Rome has greatness and strength and beauty of a kind, **but of a kind which is out of keeping with its proper character.** Men have wondered at its vast development, at the power it wields, at its immense organization, at its ramifications, and have been drawn by these things into its communion. Others, considering the fruit it has borne, as out of keeping with the character and teaching of Jesus Christ whom they confess to represent, have been repelled.

We have already made a brief survey of its doctrines and practices, and have found many of them a **serious variance with the teachings of the Word of God**, the Holy Scriptures, and it is not necessary to recapitulate them. But something needs to be said about the **impact of Romanism on the social life of the peoples in countries where it has held sway, for this has been most significant and condemning.**

Mention has been made of the terrible backwardness of the papal states before they were taken away from her and emerged into modern Italy. In the papal states, the Roman Catholic Church surely had a wonderful opportunity to exhibit the beauty and benefi-

cence of her rule, for she had none to limit her freedom of action. But as a matter of fact, **these states were perhaps Europe's most notable example of oppression and misrule and corruption.**

But they were not the only example. More than a century ago, Lord Macaulay drew attention to the contrasting conditions of Roman Catholic and Protestant countries. He pointed out that the territories and countries in which Roman Catholics predominated were among the most fertile and beautiful in the world, yet their peoples generally speaking were ignorant, servile, and poverty stricken. On the other hand, many of the Protestant countries were poor in natural resources, yet, **through the enterprise and diligence of their inhabitants**, they had been turned into productive and pleasant places.

Macaulay cited Italy and Scotland as illustrations of this, also Spain and Holland. Spain, not indeed rich in natural endowment, but with the riches of the new world pouring into her coffers, was perhaps the foremost country of Europe, but had fallen into decay and destitution. Holland, on the other hand, with immense natural handicaps, had risen in prosperity and power. Again Macaulay pointed to Roman Catholic parts of Germany, Switzerland, and Ireland, contrasting them with the Protestant sections of those same countries. Crossing from one to another, he was conscious of moving from a lower civilization to a higher.

The countries of South and Central America and Mexico, when compared with the United States of America, pointed out the same lesson, as did also the Roman Catholic province of Quebec, compared with the rest of Canada.

What Macaulay wrote over 100 years ago is still true, except that in areas where Roman Catholicism has lessened in power, there progress has been made. **Many Roman Catholics, especially among the intel-**

ligentsia, do not now subscribe to all the Church's beliefs, nor submit to her domineering conservatism. They believe in democratic government and **while retaining the old religious name, are too often agnostic or even atheistic.**

Illiteracy in Roman Catholic lands is far greater than in Protestant countries. In Portugal 54% of the people could not read. In Spain 46%. In Italy more than 50%. UNESCO'S report for 1950 puts illiteracy in Brazil at 57%, Chile at 28%, Columbia 44%, Peru 57%, Venezuela 57%, and Poland 23%, Eire stands at 12%.

But in Protestant countries of Europe the percentage of illiteracy is much lower. Denmark, Germany, Holland, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and Finland all have under 1%. In spite of the large numbers of foreign immigrants it has received and considerable negro population, illiteracy in the United States at that time stood at 4%.

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is not a movement just for social betterment. It is not a social Gospel. It is primarily good news of salvation for the individual. Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ regenerated and empowered by God the Holy Spirit become new creatures in Christ, while still not perfect, they do bear fruit unto holiness, and their transformed lives make for transformed homes, and for transformation in society as well, in which they move and live. The "salt of the Earth," and "the light of the world" concepts, a preservative and added flavor to the immediate community and nation. **Visible changes are brought about, working from the center outward in ever widening circles.**

There are humanists who think that better living conditions in time make better men. While we thank God for our every improvement in living conditions, experience has shown that **this in itself will NOT make men better.** This was proved by the perfect environment that Adam found himself in, PROVING THAT PERFECT ENVIRONMENT IS NOT THE ANSWER TO MAN'S PROBLEMS, BUT THAT CHRIST AND THE WORD OF GOD ARE.

The same example will take place in the second Garden of Eden, the Millennial reign of the Lord Jesus Christ on this Earth, where once again there will be rebellion, showing PERFECT ENVIRONMENT IS NOT THE ANSWER, BUT THAT CHRIST AND HIS WORD ARE.

"Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of life that now is, and of that which is to come," 1 Timothy 4:8. "BUT SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD, AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND ALL THESE THINGS SHALL BE ADDED UNTO YOU," Matthew 6:35 (i.e., food, raiment, shelter). "WHAT WILL IT PROFIT A MAN IF HE GAIN THE WHOLE WORLD AND LOSE HIS OWN SOUL?"

The established fact that social conditions in Roman Catholic countries are consistently worse than in lands where the Gospel is freely preached condemns the whole Roman system which enriches itself and impoverishes the people under its sway, not merely in material things, but in the far more important matters of spiritual, moral, and intellectual worth.

"By their fruits ye shall know them," said the Lord Jesus Christ. Now the word Christian is used in so many different ways, that a note is in order here to explain finally the connotation of the term in the following charts. Some use it to designate Church affiliation, whether Catholic or Protestant. Some would include the Roman Catholic Church, but not the Greek Orthodox Churches. Others again would restrict the term to Protestant organizations.

The word "Protestant" is also loosely used. Of recent years there have been many within the Protestant groups who have followed what is commonly called liberal theology, or the modernist movement. No longer protesting against unscriptural doctrines and practices, **these liberal groups are fulfilling some of the prophetic prophecies of the Bible, which say that in the last days there will arise within the Church errors which working like leaven, will leaven the whole lump.**

Luke 18:8, "I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the Earth?" Acts 20:29, 30, "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the Flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."

1 Corinthians 11:19, "For these must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you."

2 Thessalonians 2:3-9, "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition: Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped: so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only He who now letteth will let, until He be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders."

1 Timothy 4:1-3, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils: Speaking lies in hypocrisy: having their conscience seared with a hot iron: Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the Truth."

2 Timothy 3:1-5, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accus-

ers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God: Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

2 Timothy 3:12, 13, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." 2 Timothy 4:3, 4, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine: but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears: And they shall turn away their ears from the Truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

2 Peter 3:3, 4, "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." 1 John 2:18, "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that anti-christ shall come, even now are there many antichrists: whereby we know that it is the last time."

Jude 17, 18, "But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts."

In our two following charts we are using the term "Christian Church" in its limited sense to designate only those churches which accept the Old and New Testament in their entirety as the Divine revelation, and the only final authority of faith and practice.

The points of belief common to both Christian and Roman Catholic have already been set forth in our previous study, so it is not necessary to repeat it here. The following charts concentrate rather on the points of difference, so that the reader may be able to bring them into one inclusive picture. Obviously limitation of space prohibits the possibility of giving fine detail, for this method of presentation is panoramic and not telescopic.

CHART OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN DOCTRINES IN THE CHRISTIAN AND ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCHES

SUBJECT	CHRISTIAN	ROMAN CATHOLIC RELIGION
Foundation	Christ the Rock	Peter the rock
Headship	Jesus Christ	The Pope as Christ's vicar
Mediator	Jesus Christ alone	Mary, saints, priests
Salvation	By GRACE through faith, the ministry of God the Holy Spirit, freely	By GRACE, through the accumulation of merit, use of money, observances of rites
Worship	Spirit and Truth	Ceremonial, carnal
Teaching	The Word of God and the Holy Spirit	The Pope by the Church Authority
Aim	To save men and build them up in the faith	To bring men into their Church, to accumulate wealth and power
Objects of Worship	God alone	Also the host, Mary, saints, images, and relics
Dynamic	Love, filling of the Holy Spirit	Fear and superstition
Mystery	None	Secret organizations
Leadership	Pastor-teachers	Priests indispensable
Teaching Subjects	The Gospel of Christ	Metaphysical, derived from heathen religions, mixed.
Result	Peace and satisfaction	No certainty, anxiety.
Ultimate Issue	To be with Christ	Purgatorial fires for an indeterminate time.

HISTORICAL CHART OF THE CHRISTIAN AND CATHOLIC CHURCH

THE AGE OF THE ISRAEL

- A.D. 0—The birth of Christ
- A.D. 32—The death of Christ
- A.D. 32—The resurrection and ascension of Christ
- A.D. 32—The coming of the Holy Spirit

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH ESTABLISHED

FIRST PERIOD, EARLY CHURCH

- Persecution
- A.D. 313—Emperor Constantine proclaims Christian freedom of worship
- A.D. 324—Church flourishes
- A.D. 325—First general Church Council
- A.D. 431—First worship of Mary
- A.D. 593—Doctrine of Purgatory introduced

SECOND PERIOD, THE DARK AGES

- A.D. 600—Use of the Latin in worship introduced
- A.D. 787—Worship of images and relics introduced
- A.D. 788—Worship of Mary
- A.D. 819—First observance of the Feast of Assumption
- A.D. 1074—Priests forbidden to marry
- A.D. 1075—Compulsory divorce of wives married to priests
- A.D. 1100—Payments for masses introduced
- A.D. 1115—Confession made an article of faith
- A.D. 1190—Sale of indulgences
- A.D. 1215—Transubstantiation made an article of faith
- A.D. 1226—Elevation of the host introduced
- A.D. 1229—The laity forbidden to read the Scriptures
- A.D. 1303—Roman Catholic Church proclaimed as the only true Church in which
alone salvation is found
- A.D. 1415—Declaration that only priests might say masses
- A.D. 1439—The seven sacraments and doctrine of Purgatory made articles of faith

THE END OF THE DARK AGES

THIRD PERIOD, THE REFORMATION

A.D. 1517—The Reformation

A.D. 1546—Tradition given equal authority with the Scriptures

A.D. 1562—The mass declared to be a propitiatory offering, confirmation of worship
of saints

A.D. 1634—Canonization procedure promulgated

A.D. 1854—Promulgation of the doctrine of immaculate conception

A.D. 1864—Declaration of the temporal authority of the Pope

A.D. 1870—Declaration of papal infallibility

A.D. 1950—Assumption of Mary made an article of faith

THIS CHART INCLUDES SOME DATES WHICH ARE ONLY APPROXIMATE. AGAIN AND AGAIN DOCTRINES WERE DISCUSSED, SOMETIMES FOR SEVERAL CENTURIES BEFORE THEY WERE FINALLY ACCEPTED AND PROMULGATED AS ARTICLES OF FAITH.

CONCLUSION

We are well aware as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ that there are “many good sincere” people within the Roman Catholic Church. **Such “goodness” however is not a passport to heaven.** Because the Scripture says, “All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags in His sight,” Isaiah 64:6. **But we recognize also, with thankfulness to the Lord, that there must be members of the Roman Catholic Church who are truly saved, and are trying to follow the Lord Jesus Christ.** The reason for this is that while the Roman Catholic Church had departed from the Word of God, there are still those within it who, conscious of being lost, have put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as their own personal Saviour.

But the majority of Roman Catholics are not like this. **They have been brought under the influence and bondage of the whole system which distorts the Truth.** This system admittedly has an imposing historical background, a paramount organization, and a beautiful exterior with elaborate rites, coupled with immense power.

All these things, however, are but counterfeits and no real part of the Gospel of GRACE in Christ. Religion is a counterfeit Christianity, and Satan is the Father of religion. John 8:44, “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the Truth, because there is no Truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.”

The true Gospel is found in an open Bible. Its progress does not depend upon carnal strength. **It spreads through the power of prayer and witness of the Word of God. Its teachings know nothing of an infallible Pope, but it does tell of an infallible Saviour, who is Himself the Way, the Truth, and the ONLY Life.**

We graciously exhort all Catholics to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as their own per-

sonal Saviour, and thus become true children of God. “We are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus,” Galatians 3:26. “But as many as received Him, to them gave He the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God,” John 1:12, 13.

No matter who you are or what you are or have, the Pope, priests, baptism, church membership, confirmation, confession, holy communion, if you have not personally accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as your own personal Saviour YOU DO NOT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE. Yet if you have none of these things, but you have received Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour, YOU HAVE ETERNAL LIFE AND YOU CAN BE SURE OF IT RIGHT NOW.

1 John 5:11-13, “And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the Name of the Son of God: that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the Name of the Son of God.”

Moreover you can possess the joy and peace of which Paul and Peter spoke. “Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit,” Romans 15:13. “Whom,” Jesus, “having not seen, ye love: in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls,” 1 Peter 1:8, 9.

Pick up the Bible and read it for yourself. You need no man to teach you because God the Holy Spirit is our Teacher and our Guide. You can pick up either the Douay Catholic Bible or the King James Protestant Bible, either one will do it. They both say,

“For by GRACE are ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: **Not of works**, lest any man should boast,” Ephesians 2:8, 9. In fact, the Catholic Bible, Douay version, is even clearer, because it brings in the tenses of the Greek verb more accurately and it says literally, “FOR BY GRACE YE HAVE BEEN SAVED THROUGH FAITH, and that not of yourselves...” You can freely read both the Protestant and the Catholic Bibles and compare them one with the other as you read, and you will be surprised to find how very small and few the differences are between them. As you do this you will be able to judge for yourselves whether what we have said in our study is true or false. We use the Bible as our criterion.

If there are things you do not understand, do not hesitate to call upon us. We are more than willing to help you.

If you are not a Catholic, the issue is still the same. Do you have eternal life? While it is true that the Catholic Church cannot give you eternal life, **it is also true that no Protestant church can do it either. Only the Lord Jesus Christ Himself can give this priceless gift to you.** “This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance

that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,” 1 Timothy 1:15.

Acts 4:12, “Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other Name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.” Protestants who look carefully into the differences between Roman Catholic doctrine and practice, and the Truth revealed in the Bible, will learn to love the Word of God more and more and to cherish the treasures of God the Father’s love for us in Christ Jesus. Faith will be strengthened by this exercise, and you will be protected from error of every sort.

“BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AND THOU SHALT BE SAVED.”

Buddy Dano, Pastor
Divine Viewpoint Bible Studies
www.divineviewpoint.com