

Roman Catholicism By Lorraine Boettner

Chapter VII Mary Part 1



This is the continuation of the previous chapter [Roman Catholicism By Lorraine Boettner Section Two Chapter VI The Papacy](#). This chapter is very long which is why I am dividing it into two parts.

1 Mary's Place in Scripture

The New Testament has surprisingly little to say about Mary. Her last recorded words were spoken at the marriage in Cana, at the very beginning of Jesus' ministry: "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it"—then silence. But the Church of Rome breaks that silence, and from sources entirely outside of Scripture builds up a most elaborate system of Mary works and Mary devotions.

Following Mary's appearance at the marriage in Cana, we meet her only once more during Jesus' public ministry, when she and His brothers came where He was speaking to the multitudes, seeking Him, only to draw the rebuke: "Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? Whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother" (Matthew 12:46-50). She was present at the cross, where she was committed to the care of the disciple John for the remainder of her natural life (John 19:25-27). Finally, in Acts 1:14, she is mentioned as having been with the disciples and the other women and the Lord's brethren engaged steadfastly in prayer immediately after the ascension, but she has no prominent place.

The apostles never prayed to Mary, nor, so far as the record goes, did they show her any special honor. Peter, Paul, John, and James do not mention her name even once in the epistles which they wrote to the churches. John took care of her until she died, but he does not mention her in any of his three epistles or in the book of Revelation. We recall that Prime Minister Churchill used to make it a special point of honor to mention the Queen in his eloquent public addresses. Imagine the prime Minister of England never mentioning the Queen in any of his addresses to Parliament or in any of his state papers!

When the church was instituted at Pentecost there was only one name given among men whereby we must be saved, that of Jesus (Acts 4:12). Wherever the eyes of the church are directed to the abundance of grace, there is no mention of Mary. Surely this silence is a rebuke to those who would build a system of salvation around her. God has given us all the record we need concerning Mary, and that record does not indicate that worship or veneration in any form is to be given to her. How complete, then, is the falsehood of

Romanism that gives primary worship and devotion to her!

2 "Mother of God"

The doctrine of "Mary, the Mother of God," as we know it today is the result of centuries of growth, often stimulated by pronouncements of church prelates. And yet the full-fledged system of Mariolatry is a comparatively recent development in Roman Catholic dogma. In fact the last one hundred years have quite appropriately been called the "Century of Mariolatry."

As late as the fourth century there are no indications of any special veneration of Mary. Such veneration at that time could begin only if one were recognized as a saint, and only the martyrs were counted as saints. But since there was no evidence that Mary had suffered a martyr's death, she was excluded from sainthood. Later the ascetics came to be acknowledged as among the saints. That proved to be the opening age for the sainthood of Mary, for surely she of all people, it was alleged, must have lived an ascetic life! The church acknowledged that Christ was born of the virgin Mary. Apocryphal tradition built on those possibilities, and slowly the system emerged.

The phrase "Mother of God" originated in the Council of Ephesus, in the year 431. It occurs in the Creed of Chalcedon, which was adopted by the council which met in that city in 451, and in regard to the person of Christ it declared that He was "born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God according to the manhood"—which latter term means: according to the flesh of human nature. The purpose of the expression as used by the Council of Ephesus was not to glorify Mary, but to emphasize the deity of Christ over against those who denied His equality with the Father and the Holy Spirit. A heretical sect, the Nestorians, separated the two natures in Christ to such an extent that they held Him to be two persons, or rather a dual person formed by the union between the divine Logos and the human person Jesus of Nazareth. They were accused of teaching that the Logos only inhabited the man Jesus, from which it was inferred that they held that the person born of Mary was only a man. It was therefore only to emphasize the fact that the "person" born to Mary was truly divine that she was called "the Mother of God."

Hence the term today has come to have a far different meaning from that intended by the early church. It no longer has reference to the orthodox doctrine concerning the person of Christ, but instead is used to exalt Mary to a supernatural status as Queen of Heaven, Queen of the Angels, etc., so that, because of her assumed position of prominence in heaven, she is able to approach her Son effectively and to secure for her followers whatever favors they ask through her. When we say that a woman is the mother of a person we mean that she gave birth to that person. But Mary certainly did not give birth to God, nor to Jesus Christ as the eternal Son of God. She was not the mother of our Lord's divinity, but only of His humanity. Instead, Christ, the second person of the Trinity, has existed from all eternity, and was Mary's Creator. Hence the term as used in the present day Roman Church must be rejected.

In the life and worship of the Roman Church there has been a long course of development, setting forth Mary's perpetual virginity, her exemption from

original sin and from any sin of commission, and now her bodily assumption to heaven. In the Roman Church Mary is to her worshippers what Christ is to us. She is the object of all religious affections, and the source whence all the blessings of salvation are sought and expected.

The Bible calls Mary the "Mother of Jesus," but gives her no other title. All that the Roman Church has to substantiate her worship of Mary is a sheaf of traditions entirely outside the Bible telling of her appearances to certain monks, nuns, and others venerated as saints. At first glance the term "Mother of God" may seem comparatively harmless. But the actual consequence is that through its use Roman Catholics come to look upon Mary as stronger, more mature, and more powerful than Christ. To them she becomes the source of His being and overshadows Him. So they go to her, not to Him. "He came to us through Mary," says Rome, "and we must go to Him through her." Who would go to "the Child," even to "the holy Child," for salvation when His mother seems easier of access and more responsive? Romanism magnifies the person that the Holy Spirit wants minimized, and minimizes the person that the Holy Spirit wants magnified.

Says S. E. Anderson:

"Roman priests call Mary the 'mother of God,' a name impossible, illogical, and unscriptural. It is impossible, for God can have no mother; He is eternal and without beginning while Mary was born and died within a few short years. It is illogical, for God does not require a mother for His existence. Jesus said, 'Before Abraham was born, I am' (John 8:58). It is unscriptural, for the Bible gives Mary no such contradictory name. Mary was the honored mother of the human body of Jesus—no more—as every Catholic must admit if he wishes to be reasonable and Scriptural. The divine nature of Christ existed from eternity past, long before Mary was born. Jesus never called her 'mother'; He called her 'woman'" (Booklet, *Is Rome the True Church?* p. 20).

And Marcus Meyer says:"

God has no mother. God has always existed. God Himself is the Creator of all things. Since a mother must exist before her child, if you speak of a 'mother of God' you are thereby putting someone before God. And you are therefore making that person God. ... Mary would weep to hear anyone so pervert the truth as to call her the mother of her Creator. True, Jesus was God; but He was also man. And it was only as man that He could have a mother. Can you imagine Mary introducing Jesus to others with the words: 'This is God, my Son?'" (Pamphlet, *No Mother*).

Furthermore, if the Roman terminology is correct and Mary is to be Called God's mother, then Joseph was God's stepfather; James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas were God's brothers; Elizabeth was God's aunt; John the Baptist was God's cousin; Heli was God's grandfather, and Adam was God's 59th great grandfather. Such references to God's relatives sound more like a page out of Mormonism than Christianity.

The correct statement of the person of Christ in this regard is: As His human nature had no father, so His divine nature had no mother.

3 Historical Development

It is not difficult to trace the origin of the worship of the Virgin Mary. The early church knew nothing about the cult of Mary as it is practiced today—and we here use the word “cult” in the dictionary sense of “the veneration or worship of a person or thing; extravagant homage.”

The first mention of the legend about Mary is found in the so-called Proto-Evangelism of James, near the end of the second century, and presents a fantastic story about her birth. It also states that she remained a virgin throughout her entire life. Justin Martyr, who died in 165 compares Mary and Eve, the two prominent women in the Bible. Irenaeus, who died in 202, says that the disobedience of the “virgin Eve” was atoned for by the obedience of the “virgin Mary.” Tertullian, who was one of the greatest authorities in the ancient church, and who died in 222, raised his voice against the legend concerning Mary’s birth. He also held that after the birth of Jesus, Mary and Joseph lived in a normal marriage relationship. The first known picture of Mary is found in the Priscilla catacomb in Rome and dates from the second century.

Thus the Christian church functioned for at least 150 years without idolizing the name of Mary. The legends about her begin to appear after that, although for several centuries the church was far from making a cult of it. But after Constantine’s decree making Christianity the preferred religion, the Greek-Roman pagan religions with their male gods and female goddesses exerted an increasingly stronger influence upon the church. Thousands of the people who then entered the church brought with them the superstitions and devotions which they had long given to Isis, Ishtar, Diana, Athena, Artemis, Aphrodite, and other goddesses, which were then conveniently transferred to Mary. Statues were dedicated to her, as there had been statues dedicated to Isis, Diana, and others, and before them the people knelt and prayed as they had been accustomed to do before the statues of the heathen goddesses.

Many of the people who came into the church had no clear distinction in their minds between the Christian practices and those that had been practiced in their heathen religions. Statues of pagan gods and heroes found a place in the church, and were gradually replaced by statues of saints. The people were allowed to bring into the church those things from their old religions that could be reconciled with the type of Christianity then developing, hence many who bowed down before the images of Mary were in reality worshipping their old gods under a new name. History shows that in several countries Roman Catholicism has absorbed local deities as saints, and has absorbed local goddesses into the image of the Madonna. One of the more recent examples is that of the Virgin of Guadalupe, a goddess worshipped by the Indians in Mexico, which resulted in a curious mixture of Romanism and paganism, with sometimes one, sometimes the other predominating—some pictures of the Virgin Mary now appearing show her without the Child in her arms.

As we have seen, the expression “Mother of God,” as set forth in the decree of the Council of Ephesus gave an impetus to Mary worship, although the practice did not become general until two or three centuries later. From the fifth century on, the Mary cult becomes more common. Mary appears more

frequently in paintings, churches were named after her, and prayers were offered to her as an intercessor. The famous preacher Chrysostom, who died in 407, resisted the movement wholeheartedly, but his opposition had little effect in stemming the movement. The Roman Catholics took as their text the words of the angel to Mary, found in Luke 1:28: "And he came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee." It is to be noted, however, that shortly after the angel spoke to Mary, Elizabeth, speaking by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, did not say, "Blessed art thou above women," but, "Blessed art thou among women" (Luke 1:42). Starting with the false premise that Mary was above all other women, there developed the practice of worshipping her.

Invocation of the saints had a similar origin. In the year 610 Pope Boniface IV first suggested the celebration of an All Saints festival and ordered that the Pantheon, a pagan temple in Rome that had been dedicated to all the gods, should be converted into a Christian church and the relics of the saints placed therein. He then dedicated the church to the Blessed Virgin and all the martyrs. Thus the worship of Mary and the saints replaced that of the heathen gods and goddesses, and it was merely a case of one error being substituted for another.

The spiritual climate of the Middle Ages was favorable to the development of Mary worship. Numerous superstitions crept into the church and centered themselves in the worship of the Virgin and the saints. The purely pagan character of these practices, with dates and manner of observance, can be traced by any competent historian.

The art of the Middle Ages represented Mary with the child Jesus, Mary as "mater dolorosa" at the cross, etc. The rosary became popular; poems and hymns were written in honor of the "god-mother." Stories of miracles performed by her started in response to prayers addressed to her.

Also during that period arose the custom of looking to "patron saints," who in fact were merely Christianized forms of old pagan gods. In polytheism everything had its own god—the sea, war, hunting, merchants, agriculture, etc. After the same fashion there developed the Roman Catholic gallery of "patron saints" for seamen, soldiers, travelers, hunters, and in modern times, for fliers, divers, cyclists, artillerymen, etc. This kinship with the pagan cults explains why Mary worship developed so rapidly after Constantine made Christianity the official religion.

4 Contrast Between Roman and Protestant Teaching

We are indebted to Dr. Joseph Zacchello, editor of *The Convert*, Clairton, Pennsylvania for the following statement concerning Mary's place in the Christian church, followed by extracts in one column from Liguori's book, *The Glories of Mary*, and in a parallel column extracts setting forth what the Bible teaches:

"The most beautiful story ever told is the story of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. And a part of that beautiful story is the account of Mary, the mother of our Lord.

"Mary was a pure virtuous woman. Nothing is clearer in all the Word of God than this truth. Read the accounts of Matthew and Luke and you see her as she is—pure in mind, humble, under the hand of God, thankful for the blessing of God, having faith to believe the message of God, being wise to understand the purpose of God in her life.

"Mary was highly favored beyond all other women. It was her unique honor that she should be the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed was Mary among women. Through her, God gave His most priceless gift to man.

"But, though Mary be worthy of all honor as a woman favored of God beyond all others, and though she be indeed a splendid, beautiful, godly character, and though she be the mother of our Lord, Mary can neither intercede for us with God, nor can she save us, and certainly we must not worship her. There is nothing clearer in the Word of God than this truth.

Let us notice this truth as it is diligently compared with the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church and the Word of God. The following quotations are taken from the book, *The Glories of Mary*, which was written by Bishop Alphonse de Liguori, one of the greatest devotional writers of the Roman Catholic Church, and the Word of God taken from the Douay Version which is approved by James Cardinal Gibbons, Archbishop of Baltimore. The Editor's notice says, 'Everything that our saint has written is, as it were, a summary of Catholic tradition on the subject that it treats; it is not an individual author; it is, so to speak, the church herself that speaks to us by the voice of her prophets, her apostles, her pontiffs, her saints, her fathers, her doctors of all nations and ages. No other book appears to be more worthy of recommendation in this respect than *The Glories of Mary*.'" (1931 edition; Redemptorist Fathers, Brooklyn). Note the following deadly parallel:

Mary Is Given the Place Belonging to Christ

Roman Catholic Church:

"And she is truly a mediatrix of peace between sinners and God. Sinners receive pardon by... Mary alone" (pp. 82-83). "Mary is our life. ... Mary in obtaining this grace for sinners by her intercession, thus restores them to life" (p. 80). "He fails and is LOST who has not recourse to Mary" (p. 94).

The Word of God:

For there is one God, and ONE Mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5). "Jesus saith to him: I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). "Christ... is our life" (Col. 3:4).

Mary Is Glorified More than Christ

Roman Catholic Church:

"The Holy Church commands a WORSHIP peculiar to MARY" (p. 130). "Many things... are asked from God, and are not granted; they are asked from MARY, and are obtained," for "She... is even Queen of Hell, and Sovereign Mistress of the

Devils" (pp. 127, 141, 143).

The Word of God:

"In the Name of Jesus Christ... For there is no other name under Heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 3:6, 4:12). His Name is "above every name... not only in this world, but also in that which is to come" (Eph. 1:21).

Mary Is the Gate to Heaven Instead of Christ

Roman Catholic Church:

"Mary is called... the gate of heaven because no one can enter that blessed kingdom without passing through HER" (p. 160).

"The Way of Salvation is open to none otherwise than through MARY," and since "Our salvation is in the hands of Mary... He who is protected by MARY will be saved, he who is not will be lost" (pp. 169-170).

The Word of God:

"I am the door. By me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved," says Christ (John 10:1,7,9).

"Jesus saith to him, I am the way... no man cometh to the Father but by me" (John 14:6). "Neither is there Salvation in any other" (Acts 4:12).

Mary Is Given the Power of Christ

Roman Catholic Church:

"All power is given to thee in Heaven and on earth," so that "at the command of MARY all obey—even God... and thus... God has placed the whole Church... under the domination of MARY" (pp. 180-181). Mary "is also the Advocate of the whole human race... for she can do what she wills with God" (p. 193).

The Word of God:

"All power is given to me in Heaven and in earth," so that "in the Name of JESUS every knee should bow," "that in all things He may hold the primacy" (Matt. 28:18, Phil. 2:9-11, Col. 1:18).

"But if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, JESUS CHRIST the Just: and he is the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 2:1-2).

Mary Is the Peace-Maker Instead of Jesus Christ Our Peace

Roman Catholic Church:

Mary is the Peace-maker between sinners and God" (p. 197).

"We often more quickly obtain what we ask by calling on the name of MARY, than by invoking that of Jesus." "She... is our Salvation, our Life, our Hope, our Counsel, our Refuge, our Help" (pp. 254, 257).

The Word of God:

But now in CHRIST JESUS, you, who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace" (Eph. 2:13-14).

"Hitherto you have not asked anything in my name. Ask, and you shall receive," for "Whatsoever we shall ask according to His will, He heareth us" (John 16:23-24).

Mary Is Given the Glory that Belongs to Christ Alone

Roman Catholic Church:

"The whole Trinity, O MARY, gave thee a name... above every other name, that at Thy name, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, on earth, and under the earth" (p. 260).

The Word of God:

God also hath highly exalted HIM, and hath given HIM a Name which is above all names, that in the Name of JESUS every knee should bow, of those that are in Heaven, on earth, and under the earth" (Phil. 2:9-10).

Liguori, more than any other one person, has been responsible for promoting Mariolatry in the Roman Church, dethroning Christ and enthroning Mary in the hearts of the people. Yet instead of excommunicating him for his heresies, the Roman Church has canonized him as a saint and has published his book in many editions, more recently under the imprimatur of Cardinal Patrick Joseph Hays, of New York.

In a widely used prayer book, the *Raccolta*, which has been especially indulged by several popes and which therefore is accepted by Romanists as authoritative, we read such as the following:

"Hail, Queen, Mother of Mercy, our Life. Sweetness, and Hope, all Hail! To thee we cry, banished sons of Eve; to thee we sigh, groaning and weeping in this vale of tears."

"We fly beneath thy shelter, O holy Mother of God, despise not our petitions in our necessity, and deliver us always from all perils, O glorious and Blessed Virgin."

"Heart of Mary, Mother of God... Worthy of all the veneration of angels and men. ... In thee let the Holy Church find safe shelter; protect it, and be its asylum, its tower, its strength."

"Sweet heart of Mary, be my salvation."

"Leave me not, My Mother, in my own hands, or I am lost; let me but cling to thee. Save me, my Hope; save me from hell."

Also in the *Raccolta* prayers are addressed to Joseph:

"Benign Joseph, our guide, protect us and the Holy Church."

"Guardian of Virgins, and Holy Father Joseph, to whose faithful keeping Christ Jesus, innocence itself, and Mary, Virgin of Virgins, were committed, I pray and beseech thee by those two dear pledges, Jesus and Mary, that being preserved from all uncleanness, I may with spotless mind, pure heart, and chaste body, ever most chastely serve Jesus and Mary. Amen."

The rosary, which is by far the most popular Roman Catholic ritual prayer, contains fifty "Hail Mary's." The *Hail Mary* (or *Ave Maria*) is follows:

"Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now, and at the hour of our death. Amen."

5 Mary as an Object of Worship

The devotions to Mary are undoubtedly the most spontaneous of any in the Roman Catholic worship. Attendance at Sunday mass is obligatory, under penalty of mortal sin if one is absent without a good reason, and much of the regular service is formalistic and routine. But the people by the thousands voluntarily attend novenas for the "Sorrowful Mother." Almost every religious order dedicates itself to the Virgin Mary. National shrines, such as those at Lourdes in France, Fatima in Portugal, and Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico, are dedicated to her and attract millions. The shrine of St. Anne de Beaupre, in Quebec, the most popular shrine in Canada, is dedicated to Saint Anne, who according to apocryphal literature was the mother of Mary. Thousands of churches, schools, hospitals, convents, and shrines are dedicated to her glory.

It is difficult for Protestants to realize the deep love and reverence that devout Roman Catholics have for the Virgin Mary. One must be immersed in and saturated with the Roman Catholic mind in order to feel its heartbeat. Says Margaret Shepherd, an ex nun:

"No words can define to my readers the feeling of reverential love I had for the Virgin Mary. As the humble suppliant kneels before her statue he thinks of her as the tender, compassionate mother of Jesus, the friend and mediatrix of sinners. The thought of praying to Christ for any special grace without seeking the intercession of Mary never occurred to me" (*My Life in the Convent*, p. 31).

The titles given Mary are in themselves a revelation of Roman Catholic sentiment toward her. She is called: Mother of God, Queen of the Apostles, Queen of Heaven, Queen of the Angels, the Door of Paradise, the Gate of Heaven, Our Life, Mother of Grace, Mother of Mercy, and many others which ascribe to her supernatural powers.

All of those titles are false. Let us consider just two of them. When she is called "Queen of the Apostles," is that an apostolic doctrine? Where is it found? Certainly it is not in Scripture. When did the apostles elect Mary their queen? Or when was she appointed by God to be their queen? And the title "Queen of Heaven" is equally false, or even worse. Heaven has no

“queen.” The only references in Scripture to prayers to the “queen of heaven” are found in Jeremiah 7:18, 44:17-19,25, where it is severely condemned as a heathen custom practiced by some apostate Jews. This so-called “queen of heaven” was a Canaanitish goddess of fertility, Astarte (plural, Ashtaroth) (Judges 2:13). How shameful to impose a heathen title on Mary, and then to venerate her as another deity!

How can anyone of the perhaps one hundred million practicing Roman Catholics throughout the world who desire Mary’s attention imagine that she can give him that attention during his prayers to her, his wearing her scapulars for special protection, his marching in parades in her honor, etc., while at the same time she is giving attention to all others who are praying to her, attending to her duties in heaven, conducting souls to heaven, rescuing souls from purgatory, etc.? The average Roman Catholic acts on the assumption that Mary has the powers of deity. There is nothing in the Bible to indicate that any departed human being, however good, has any further contact with affairs on this earth, or that he can hear so much as one prayer from earth. How, then, can a human being such as Mary hear the prayers of millions of Roman Catholics, in many different countries, praying in many different languages, all at the same time? Let any priest or layman try to converse with only three people at the same time and see how impossible that is for a human being. They impose on Mary works which no human being can do. How impossible, how absurd, to impose on her the works which only God can do! Since Mary is not omnipresent nor omniscient, such prayers and worship are nothing less than idolatry—that is, the giving of divine honors to a creature. Nowhere in the Bible is there the slightest suggestion that prayer should be offered to Mary. If God had intended that we should pray to her, surely He would have said so. Worship is accorded to the infant Jesus, but never to His mother. When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, wise men came from the East, and when they came into the house, they saw the young child with Mary His mother. What did they do? Did they fall down and worship Mary? Or Joseph? No! We read: “They fell down and worshipped him” (Matthew 2:11). And to whom did they give their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh? To Mary? Or to Joseph? No! They presented their gifts to Jesus. They recognized Him, not Mary or Joseph, as worthy of adoration.

Furthermore, in Old Testament times the Jews prayed to God, but never to Abraham, or Jacob, or David, or to any of the prophets. There is never the slightest suggestion that prayers should be offered to anyone other than God. Nor did the apostles ever ask the early Christians to worship, or venerate, or pray to Mary or to any other human being.

The objections against prayers to Mary apply equally against prayers to the saints. For they too are only creatures, infinitely less than God, able to be at only one place at a time and to do only one thing at a time. How, then, can they listen to and answer the thousands upon thousands of petitions made simultaneously in many different lands and in many different languages? Many such petitions are expressed, not orally, but only mentally, silently. How can Mary and the saints, without being like God, be present everywhere and know the secrets of all hearts?

That living saints should pray to departed saints seems on the face of it to

be the very height of the ridiculous. But the fact is that most Roman Catholics pray to Mary and the saints more than they pray to God. Yet they cannot explain how departed saints can hear and answer prayers. The endless prayers to the Virgin and to the countless saints cannot bring one closer to God. And particularly when we see all the gaudy trappings that are resorted to in Rome's distorted version of a glamour queen the whole procedure becomes, to Protestants, truly abhorrent.

The Roman Church commits grievous sin in promoting the worship of Mary. It dishonors God, first, by its use of images, and secondly, by giving to a creature the worship that belongs only to the Creator. We have here merely another example of Rome's persistent tendency to add to the divinely prescribed way of salvation. Romanism sets forth faith and works, Scripture and tradition, Christ and Mary, as the means of salvation.

Charles Chiniquy, a former priest from Montreal, Canada, who became a Presbyterian minister, tells of the following conversation between himself and his bishop when doubts began to assail him regarding the place given to Mary:

"My lord, who has saved you and me upon the cross?"

He answered, "Jesus Christ."

"Who paid your debt and mine by shedding His blood; was it Mary or Jesus?"

He said, "Jesus Christ."

"Now, my lord, when Jesus and Mary were on earth, who loved the sinner more; was it Mary or Jesus?"

Again he answered that it was Jesus.

"Did any sinner come to Mary on earth to be saved?"

"No."

"Do you remember that any sinner has gone to Jesus to be saved?"

"Yes, many."

"Have they been rebuked?"

"Never."

Do you remember that Jesus ever said to sinners, "Come to Mary and she will save you?"

"No," he said.

"Do you remember that Jesus has said to poor sinners, "Come to me?"

"Yes, He has said it."

"Has He ever retracted those words?"

"No."

"And who was, then, the more powerful to save sinners?" I asked.

"O, it was Jesus!"

"Now, my lord, since Jesus and Mary are in heaven, can you show me in the Scriptures that Jesus has lost anything of His desire and power to save sinners, or that He has delegated this power to Mary?"

And the bishop answered, "No."

"Then, my lord," I asked, "why do we not go to Him, and to Him alone? Why do we invite poor sinners to come to Mary, when, by your own confession she is nothing compared with Jesus, in power, in mercy, in love, and in compassion for the sinner?"

To that the bishop could give no answer ([Fifty Years in the Church of Rome](#), p. 262).

Even to this day the province of Quebec is almost solidly Roman Catholic. Throughout the province one can scarcely hear the Gospel in any church, or on any local radio broadcast, or obtain anything but Roman Catholic literature. Quebec is full of idols. The late pope Pius XII declared that the province of Quebec was the world's most Catholic country. But everywhere Mary, and not Christ, is represented as the only hope of the four million French-Canadians. And, let it be noticed further, the province of Quebec has the most illiteracy, the poorest schools, and the lowest standard of living of any province in Canada.

It is very difficult to convince Roman Catholic people that Christ has won for them the right to go directly to God in prayer. They read the Bible but very little. Instead they fall back on what their priests have taught them, that to obtain mercy and forgiveness they must cajole some saint, some close and favored friend of God, to intercede for them. And the most powerful intercessor of all, of course, is Mary, since she is the mother of Christ. But the absurd thing about saint worship is that neither Mary nor any of the others ever promised, when they were living, that they would pray for their devotees after reaching heaven.

According to New Testament usage, all true Christians are saints. Paul's letters to the Ephesians was addressed, "to the saints that are at Ephesus" (1:1); his letter to the Philippians, "to all the saints that are at Philippi" (1:1). See also Romans 1:7, 16:15; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 1:1. It has well been said, If you want a "saint" to pray for you, find a true Christian and make the request of him. His prayer will be more effective than any request that can be made through departed saints. We have no need for the intercession of Mary, or departed saints, or angels, for we ourselves have direct access to God through Christ. Furthermore, not only do we have no single instance in the Bible of a living saint worshipping a departed saint, but all attempts on the part of the living to make any kind of contact with

the dead are severely condemned (Deuteronomy 18:9-12, Exodus 22:18, Leviticus 20:6, Isaiah 8:19-20).

The Scriptures directly repudiate all saint worship. We have specific examples of Peter, and Paul, and even of an angel rejecting such worship. When Peter went to the house of Cornelius in response to the vision that he had while at prayer on the housetop, we read that "Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter raised him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man" (Acts 10:25-26). Although Peter was one of the twelve, and had been personally associated with Jesus, he knew that he had no right to such worship for he was only a man. At Lystra, after Paul had healed a lame man, the multitude attempted to worship him and Barnabas. We read: "But when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of it, they rent their garments, and sprang forth among the multitude, crying out and saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you and bring you good tidings, that ye should turn from these vain things unto a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is" (Acts 14:14-15). And the apostle John writes concerning his experience on the island of Patmos: "And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel that showed me these things. And he saith unto me, See thou do it not: I am a fellow- servant with thee and with thy brethren the prophets, and with them that keep the words of this book: worship God" (Revelation 22:8-9). But how different is the attitude of popes, bishops, and priests who expect people to kneel before them and to kiss their hands or rings! The pope allows or expects that under some conditions they shall even kiss his feet! But what nonsense that is, both on the part of the pope and on the part of those who submit themselves to such a servile practice!

6 In Romanism Mary Usurps the Place of Christ

A striking phenomenon in Roman Catholicism is the effective way in which they have caused Mary to usurp the place of Christ as the primary mediator between God and men. Christ is usually represented as a helpless babe in a manger or in His mother's arms, or as a dead Christ upon a cross. The babe in a manger or in His mother's arms gives little promise of being able to help anyone. And the dead Christ upon a cross, with a horribly ugly and tortured face, is the very incarnation of misery and helplessness, wholly irrelevant to the needs and problems of the people. Such a Christ might inspire feelings of pity and compassion but not of confidence and hope. He is a defeated, not a victorious, Christ. The Roman Church cannot get its people to love a dead Christ, no matter how many masses are said before Him or how many images are dedicated to Him. There can be no real love for Christ unless the worshipper sees Him as his living Savior, who died for him, but who arose, and who now lives gloriously and triumphantly—as indeed He is presented in Protestantism. In the Roman Church the people prefer a living Mary to a dead Christ. And the result is that the center of worship has shifted from Christ to Mary.

Despite all protestations to the contrary, the fact is that the worship, intercessions, and devotions that are given to Mary obscure the glory of Christ and cause the church to set forth a system of salvation in which human merit plays a decisive part. While asserting the deity of Christ, Rome

nevertheless makes Him subservient to the Virgin, and dispenses salvation at a price through the agency of the priest. This most blessed of women, the mother of Jesus, is thus made His chief rival and competitor for the loyalty and devotion of the human heart. In Romanism Mary becomes the executive director of deity, the one through whom the prayers of the people are made effective.

Mary has nothing whatever to do with our salvation. All who think she does are simply deceived. And yet in Romanism probably ten times as much prayer is directed to her as to Christ. The most popular prayer ritual of Roman Catholics, the rosary, has ten prayers to Mary for each one directed to God. The prayer book contains more prayers which are to be offered to Mary and the saints than to Christ. Mary is unquestionably the chief object of prayer.

7 Mary Represented as More Sympathetic than Jesus

The spiritual climate of the Middle Ages was favorable for the development of the Mary-cult. Particularly in that age Christ was represented as a Man of stern wrath, a strict judge, avenging evil with an inexorable justice, while Mary was clothed with the virtues of lovingkindness and mercy. Where Christ would demand justice, Mary would extend mercy. The simple believer, who had been told that God was an angry judge always ready to send the sinner to hell, wanted to flee to the protection of the tender-hearted and loving Mary. Even monks who lived ascetic lives and shunned or even hated women as instruments of their temptation and downfall sought the protection of Mary.

In *The Glories of Mary*, Liguori pictures Christ as a stern, cruel Judge, while Mary is pictured as a kind and lovable intercessor. Among other things Liguori says: "If God is angry with a sinner, and Mary takes him under her protection, she withholds the avenging arm of her Son, and saves him" (p. 124); "O Immaculate Virgin, prevent thy beloved Son, who is irritated by our sins, from abandoning us to the power of the devil" (p. 248); and again: "We often obtain more promptly what we ask by calling on the name of Mary, than by invoking that of Jesus" (p. 248).

In another instance Liguori teaches that Mary is the Savior of sinners, and that outside her there is no salvation. He describes an imaginary scene in which a man burdened with sin sees two ladders hanging from heaven, with Christ at the head of one and Mary at the other. He attempts to climb the ladder at which Christ is the head, but when he sees the angry face he falls back defeated. As he turns away despondent, a voice says to him, "Try the other ladder." He does so, and to his amazement he ascends easily and is met at the top by the blessed virgin Mary, who then brings him into heaven and presents him to Christ! The teaching is, "What son would refuse the request of his mother?"

The same reasoning is found among Roman Catholics today. Christ still is looked upon as a stern judge. But Mary, being a mother, is looked upon as having a mother's heart and therefore as more capable of understanding the problems of her children. She can go to her Son with her requests and petitions, and He can never refuse to grant any favor that she asks. She is represented as everywhere present. Romanists are taught to appeal to her with

confidence to allay the fierce judgment of Christ, and to turn His serious frown into a friendly smile—all of this in spite of the fact that no prayer by Mary for a sinner can be found anywhere in the New Testament.

But what a travesty it is on Scripture truth to teach that Christ demands justice, but that Mary will extend mercy! How dishonoring it is to Christ to teach that He is lacking in pity and compassion for His people, that He must be persuaded to that end by His mother! When He was on earth it was never necessary for anyone to persuade Him to be compassionate. Rather, when He saw the blind and the lame, the afflicted and hungry, He was “moved with compassion” for them and lifted them out of their distress. He had immediate mercy on the wicked but penitent thief on the cross, and there was no need for intercession by Mary although she was there present. His love for us is as great as when He was on earth; His heart is as tender; and we need no other intermediary, neither His mother after the flesh, nor any saint or angel, to entreat Him on our behalf.

8 One Mediator

The Bible teaches that there is but one mediator between God and men. It says: “For there is one God, one mediator also between God and men himself man, Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5). When this verse is understood the whole system of the Roman Church falls to the ground, for it invalidates the papacy, the priesthood, and all Mary worship. Other verses which teach the same truth are:

“I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).

“And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

“He is the mediator of a new covenant” (Hebrews 9:15).

“If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John 2:1).

“Christ Jesus... who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.” Christ, not Mary, the Scripture says, is at the right hand of God making intercession for us (Romans 8:34).

“Wherefore also he is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25).

Thus Christ, because He is both God and man, is the only Saviour, the only Mediator, the only way to God. Not one word is said about Mary, or a pope, or the priests, or the saints, as mediators. Yet Romanism teaches that there are many mediators, and the great majority of Roman Catholics, if asked, would say that our primary approach to God is through the Virgin Mary, and that only as she begs for us can we enter the presence of God.

The priests detract from the glory of Christ when they teach that Mary is a

mediator. Humanly speaking, that must grieve her who would want all honor to go to Christ. The priests have no right to place her in such an unscriptural position. Mary is presented in Scripture as a handmaiden of the Lord who fulfilled her office in the church according to promise, just as did John the Baptist and others, but whose work has long since ceased. The great antithesis is not between Eve and Mary, as Rome sets it forth, but between Adam and Christ (Romans 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22,45,47). Roman tradition has so altered the picture of Mary that the Mary found in the New Testament and the Mary found in the Roman Catholic Church are two different and conflicting persons. Any fair-minded Roman Catholic knows that his church gives first place to Mary and that Christ is kept in the background.

The reason that Mary, the saints, or angels cannot act as our priest or mediator is because they have no sacrifice, nothing to offer in behalf of our sins. Only a priest with a true sacrifice can serve as mediator between God and men. Christ alone has a true sacrifice, and He alone can act as our priest. In this connection Calvin says:

"I deem it indisputable that the papal priesthood is spurious; for it has been formed in the workshop of men. God nowhere commands a sacrifice to be offered now to Him for the expiation of sins; nowhere does He command that priests be appointed for such a purpose. While then the pope ordains his priests for the purpose of sacrificing, the Apostle [Paul] denies that they are to be accounted lawful priests."

(Continued in [Chapter VII Mary Part 2.](#))

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This is the continuation of the [previous chapter of Roman Catholicism](#) by Lorraine Boettner.

1 The Roman Catholic Position

The controversial passage in regard to Peter's place in the Church is Matthew 16:13-19, which reads as follows: "Now Jesus, having come into the district of Caesarea Philippi, began to ask his disciples, saying, 'Who do men say the Son of Man is?' But they said, 'Some say, John the Baptist; and others, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.' He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Simon Peter answered and said, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' Then Jesus answered and said, 'Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed this to thee, but my Father in heaven. And I say to thee, 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 thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Confraternity Version).

To this passage the Confraternity Version adds the following interpretation:

"The rock was Peter. ... *The gates of hell*: hostile, evil powers. Their aggressive force will struggle in vain against the Church. She shall never be overcome; she is indefectible. And since she has the office of teacher (cf. 28, 16-20), and since she would be overcome if error prevailed, she is infallible.

"Keys: a symbol of authority. Peter has the power to admit into the Church and to exclude therefrom. Nor is he merely the porter; he has complete power within the Church. 'To bind and to loose' seems to have been used by the Jews in the sense of to forbid or to permit; but the present context requires a

more comprehensive meaning. In heaven God ratifies the decisions which Peter makes on earth in the name of Christ" (pp. 36-37).

And the late Cardinal Gibbons, a former archbishop of Baltimore and one of the most representative American Roman Catholics, in his widely read book, *Faith of our Fathers*, set forth the position of his church in these words:

"The Catholic Church teaches that our Lord conferred on St. Peter the first place of honor and jurisdiction in the government of His whole church, and that the same spiritual supremacy has always resided in the popes, or bishops of Rome, as being the successors of St. Peter. Consequently, to be true followers of Christ all Christians, both among the clergy and laity, must be in communion with the See of Rome, where Peter rules in the person of his successor" (p. 95).

The whole structure of the Roman Church is built on the assumption that in Matthew 16:13-19 Christ appointed Peter the first pope and so established the papacy. Disprove the primacy of Peter, and the foundation of the papacy is destroyed. Destroy the papacy, and the whole Roman hierarchy topples with it. Their system of priesthood depends absolutely upon their claim that Peter was the first pope at Rome, and that they are his successors. We propose to show that (1) Matthew 16:13-19 does not teach that Christ appointed Peter a pope; (2) that there is no proof that Peter ever was in Rome; and (3) that the New Testament records, particularly Peter's own writings, show that he never claimed authority over the other apostles or over the church, and that that authority was never accorded to him.

2 The "Rock"

"And I say to thee, thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18, Confraternity Version).

Romanists quote this verse with relish, and add their own interpretation to establish their claim for papal authority. But in the Greek the word Peter is Petros, a person, masculine, while the word "rock," petra, is feminine and refers not to a person but to the declaration of Christ's deity that Peter had just uttered—"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Using Peter's name and making, as it were, a play upon words, Jesus said to Peter, "You are Petros, and upon this petra I will build my church." The truth that Peter had just confessed was the foundation upon which Christ would build His church. He meant that Peter had seen the basic, essential truth concerning His person, the essential truth upon which the church would be founded, and that nothing would be able to overthrow that truth, not even all the forces of evil that might be arrayed against it. Peter was the first among the disciples to see our Lord as the Christ of God. Christ commended him for that spiritual insight, and said that His church would be founded upon that fact. And that, of course, was a far different thing from founding the church on Peter.

Had Christ intended to say that the Church would be founded on Peter, it

would have been ridiculous for Him to have shifted to the feminine form of the word in the middle of the statement, saying, if we may translate literally and somewhat whimsically, "And I say unto thee, that thou art Mr. Rock, and upon this, the Miss Rock, I will build my church." Clearly it was upon the truth that Peter had expressed, the deity of Christ, and not upon weak, vacillating Peter, that the church would be founded. The Greek "petros" is commonly used of a small, movable stone, a mere pebble, as it were. But "petra" means an immovable foundation, in this instance, the basic truth that Peter had just confessed, the deity of Christ. And in fact, that is the point of conflict in the churches today between evangelicals on the one hand, and modernists or liberals on the other—whether the church is founded on a truly divine Christ as revealed in a fully trustworthy Bible, or whether it is essentially a social service and moral welfare organization which recognizes Christ as an example, an outstandingly great and good man, but denies or ignores His deity.

The Bible tells us plainly, not that the church is built upon Peter, but that it is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone" (Ephesians 2:20). And again, "For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:11). Without that foundation the true Christian church could not exist.

If Matthew 16:18 had been intended to teach that the church is founded on Peter, it would have read something like this: "Thou art Peter, and upon you I will build my church"; or, "Thou art Peter, and upon you the rock I will build my church." But that is not what Christ said. He made two complete, distinct statements. He said, "Thou art Peter," and, "Upon this rock (change of gender, indicating change of subject) I will build my church."

The gates of hell were not to prevail against the church. But the gates of hell did prevail against Peter shortly afterward, as recorded in this same chapter, when he attempted to deny that Christ would be crucified, and almost immediately afterward, in the presence of the other disciples, received the stinging rebuke, "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art a stumbling block unto me, for thou mindest not the things of God but the things of men" (v. 23)—surely strong words to use against one who had just been appointed pope!

Later we read that Peter slept in Gethsemane, during Christ's agony. His rash act in cutting off the servant's ear drew Christ's rebuke. He boasted that he was ready to die for his Master, but shortly afterward shamefully denied with oaths and curses that he even knew Him. And even after Pentecost Peter still was subject to such serious error that his hypocrisy had to be rebuked by Paul, who says: "But when Cephas came to Antioch [at which time he was in full possession of his papal powers, according to Romanist doctrine], I resisted him to the face, because he stood condemned" (Galatians 2:11). And yet Romanists allege that their pope, as Peter's successor, is infallible in matters of faith and morals!

The Gospel written by Mark, who is described in early Christian literature as Peter's close companion and understudy, does not even record the remark about the "rock" in reporting Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi (Mark

8:27-30). No, Christ did not build His church upon a weak, sinful man. Rather the essential deity of Christ, which was so forcefully set forth in Peter's confession, was the foundation stone, the starting point, on which the church would be built.

That no superior standing was conferred upon Peter is clear from the later disputes among the disciples concerning who should be greatest among them. Had such rank already been given, Christ would simply have referred to His grant of power to Peter. Instead we read:

"And they came to Capernaum: and when he was in the house he asked them, What were ye reasoning on the way? But they held their Peace: for they had disputed one with another on the way, who was the greatest. And he sat down, and called the twelve; and he saith unto them, If any man would be first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all" (Mark 9:33-35).

And again:

"And there came near unto him James and John, the sons of Zebedee, saying unto him, Teacher, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall ask of thee. And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you? And they said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and one on thy left hand, in thy glory. And when the ten heard it, they began to be moved with indignation concerning James and John. And Jesus called them unto him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they who are accounted to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it is not so among you: but whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you, shall be servant of all" (Mark 10:34-44).

It is interesting to notice that some of the church fathers, Augustine and Jerome among them, gave the Protestant explanation of this verse, understanding the "rock" to mean not Peter but Christ. Others, of course, gave the papal interpretation. But this shows that there was no "unanimous consent of the fathers," as the Roman Church claims, on this subject.

Dr. Harris says concerning the reference to the "rock":

"Mark's Gospel is connected with Peter by all early Christian tradition and it does not even include this word of Jesus to Peter. Likewise in the Epistles of Peter there is no such claim. In 1 Peter 2:6-8 Christ is called a rock and a chief cornerstone. But Peter here claims nothing for himself. Indeed he is explicit in calling all believers living stones built up a spiritual house with Christ as the head of the corner.

"Christ is repeatedly called a Rock. The background for this is that around thirty-four times in the Old Testament God is called a Rock or the Rock of Israel. It was a designation of God. In the Messianic passages, Isaiah 8:14; 28:16; and Psalm 118:22, Christ is called a Rock or Stone upon which we should believe. These passages are quoted in the New Testament and for that reason Christ is called a Rock several times. It designates Him as divine. For that reason, every Jew, knowing the Old Testament, would refuse the

designation to Peter or to anyone except insofar as we are children of Christ. He is the Rock. We are living stones built upon Him. Ephesians 2:20 says this plainly. We are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone. Paul says of the Rock from which the Israelites drank that it typified Christ (1 Corinthians 10:4). In the New Testament there are twelve foundations and on them are the names of the twelve apostles—none of them are made pre-eminent” (The Bible Presbyterian Reporter, January, 1959.)

And Dr. Henry M. Woods says:

“If Christ had meant that Peter was to be the foundation, the natural form of statement would have been, ‘Thou art Peter, and on thee I will build my church’; but He does not say this, because Peter was not to be the rock on which the church was built. Note also that in the expression ‘on this rock,’ our Lord purposely uses a different Greek word, Petra, from that used for Peter, Petros. He did this to show that, not Peter, but the great truth which had just been revealed to him, viz., that our Lord was ‘the Christ, the Son of the living God,’ was to be the church’s foundation. Built on the Christ, the everlasting Saviour, the gates of hell would never prevail against the Church. But built on the well-meaning but sinful Peter, the gates of hell would surely prevail; for a little later our Lord had to severely rebuke Peter, calling him ‘Satan’” (*Our Priceless Heritage*, p. 40).

3 The “Keys”

“And I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 16:19, Confraternity Version).

Admittedly this is a difficult verse to interpret, and numerous explanations have been given. It is important to notice, however, that the authority to bind and to loose was not given exclusively to Peter. In the eighteenth chapter of Matthew the same power *is given to all of the disciples*. There we read:

“At that hour the disciples came to Jesus. ... Amen. I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven” (vv. 1,18, Confraternity Version).

Consequently Matthew 16:19 does not prove any superiority on Peter’s part. Even the scribes and Pharisees had this same power, for Jesus said to them: “But woe upon you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye shut the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye enter not in yourselves, neither suffer them that are entering in to enter” (Matthew 23:13). And on another occasion He said: “The scribes and Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat: all things therefore whatsoever they bid you, these do and observe: but do not ye after their works; for they say, and do not. Yea, they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be born, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with their finger” (Matthew 23:2-4).

Here the expression clearly means that the scribes and Pharisees, in that the

Word of God was in their hands, thereby had the power, in declaring that Word to the people, to open the kingdom of heaven to them, and in withholding that Word they shut the kingdom of heaven against people. That was Moses' function in giving the law. It was, therefore, a declaratory power, the authority to announce the terms on which God would grant salvation, not an absolute power to admit or to exclude from the kingdom of heaven. Only God can do that, and He never delegates that authority to men.

And in Luke 11:52 Jesus says: "Woe unto you lawyers! for ye took away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered." Here, the key of the knowledge of the way of salvation, by which entrance into the kingdom of heaven is obtained, was in the hands of the Pharisees in that they had the law of Moses in their possession, and were therefore the custodians of the Word of God. In that sense they possessed the key to the kingdom. They took away that key in that they failed to proclaim the Word of God to the people. They were not entering into the kingdom of heaven themselves, and they were hindering those who wanted to enter.

Furthermore, we notice that in the words spoken to Peter, it was "things," not "persons," that were to be bound or loosed—"whatsoever," not "whomsoever"—things such as the ceremonial laws and customs of the Old Testament dispensation were to be done away with, and new rituals and practices of the Gospel age were to be established.

Thus the "keys" symbolize the authority to open, in this instance, to open the kingdom of heaven to men through the proclamation of the Gospel. What the disciples were commissioned to do, given the privilege of doing, was the opposite of that which the scribes and Pharisees were doing; that is, they were to facilitate the entrance of the people into the kingdom of heaven.

There was, of course, no physical seat which had been used by Moses and which now was being used by the scribes and Pharisees. But the scribes and Pharisees, who were in possession of the law of Moses, were giving precepts which in themselves were authoritative and good and which therefore were to be obeyed; but since they did not live up to those precepts the people were not to follow their example.

It is clear that the keys were symbolical of authority, which here is specified as the power of binding and loosing; and it is also clear that the consequences of what the disciples did in this regard would go far beyond earth and would have their permanent results in heaven. They were in a real sense building for eternity. In referring to the keys of the kingdom Jesus was continuing the figure in which He had been comparing the kingdom of heaven to a house which He was about to build. It would be built upon a solid rock (Matthew 7:24). Entrance into that house was through the door of faith. This door was to be opened, first to the Jews, and then to the Gentiles. And Peter, who had been the first of the disciples to comprehend the person of Christ in His true deity and to confess that deity before the other disciples, was commissioned to be the first to open that door. In this sense the keys were first given to him. To him was given the distinction and high honor among the apostles of being the first to open the door of faith to the Jewish world, which he did on the day of Pentecost when through his sermon

some three thousand Jews were converted (Acts 2:14-42), and a short time later the distinction and high honor of opening the door of faith to the Gentile world, which he did in the house of Cornelius (Acts 10:1-48). And while the keys were in this respect first given to Peter, they were soon afterward also given to the other disciples as they too proclaimed the Gospel both to Jews and Gentiles. But while Peter was given the distinction and honor of being the first to open the kingdom to the Jews, and then to the Gentiles, he did not claim nor assume any other authority, and was in all other respects on precisely the same footing as were the other apostles.

Possession of the keys, therefore, did not mean that Peter had sovereignly within his own person the authority to determine who should be admitted to heaven and who should be excluded, as the Roman Church now attempts to confer that authority on the pope and priests. Ultimate authority is in the hands of Christ alone—it is He “that openeth and none shall shut, and that shutteth and none openeth” (Revelation 3:7). But it did mean that Peter, and later the other apostles, being in possession of the Gospel message, truly did open the door and present the opportunity to enter in as they proclaimed the message before the people. This same privilege of opening the door or of closing the door of salvation to others is given to every Christian, for the command that Christ gave His church was to go and make disciples of all the nations. Thus “the power of the keys” is a *declarative* power only.

It can almost be said that the Roman Catholics build their church upon these two verses which speak of the “rock” and the “keys.” They say that the power given to Peter was absolute and that it was transferred by him to his successors, although they have to admit that there is not one verse in Scripture which teaches such a transfer. Under this “power of the keys” the Roman Church claims that “In heaven God ratifies the decisions which Peter makes on earth” (footnote, Confraternity Version, p. 37).

But it is interesting to see how Peter himself understood this grant of power. In his exercise of the power of the keys he says: “And it shall be, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Acts 2:21). And at the house of the Roman centurion Cornelius he again gave a universal Gospel invitation: “To him [Christ] bear all the prophets witness, that through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins” (Acts 10:43). So, in the preaching of Peter, as elsewhere in the New Testament, salvation is set forth as based on faith in Christ, and nowhere is obedience to Peter, or to the pope, or to any other man even hinted at.

Rome terribly abuses this “power of the keys” to insure obedience to her commands on the part of her church members and to instill in them a sense of fear and of constant dependence on the church for their salvation. This sense of fear and dependence, with constant references to “Mother Church,” goes far to explain the power that the Roman Church has over her members, even cowing them to the extent that they are afraid to read or to listen to anything contrary to what their church teaches. And since that teaching is drilled into them from childhood, the truly formidable power that the Roman Church exercises over the laity can be easily understood.

4 Papal Authority Not Claimed by Peter

The Roman Church claims that Peter was the first bishop or pope in Rome and that the later popes are his successors. But the best proof of a man's position and authority is his own testimony. Does Peter claim to be a pope, or to have primacy over the other apostles? Fortunately, he wrote two epistles or letters which are found in the New Testament. There he gives his position and certain instructions as to how others in the same position are to perform their duties. We read:

"Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ. ... The elders therefore among you I exhort, who am a fellow-elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according to the will of God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock" (1 Peter 1:1, 5:1-3).

Here Peter refers to himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ, an elder (the word in the Greek is *presbuteros*), which of course has nothing to do with a sacrificing priesthood. He does not claim the highest place in the church as some would expect him to do or as some would claim for him. He assumes no ecclesiastical superiority, but with profound humility puts himself on a level with those whom he exhorts. He makes it clear that the church must be democratic, not authoritarian. He forbids the leaders to lord it over the people, to work for money or to take money unjustly. He says that they are to serve the people willingly, even eagerly, and that by their general lives they are to make themselves examples for the people.

But the fact is that the Church of Rome acts directly contrary to these instructions. Can anyone imagine the proud popes of later times adopting such a role of humility? It was several centuries later, when the church had lost much of its original simplicity and spiritual power, and had been submerged in a flood of worldliness, that the autocratic authority of the popes began to appear. After the fourth century, when the Roman empire had fallen, the bishops of Rome stepped into Caesar's shoes, took his pagan title of Pontifex Maximus, the supreme high priest of the pagan Roman religion, sat down on Caesar's throne, and wrapped themselves in Caesar's gaudy trappings. And that role they have continued ever since.

In regard to the title Pontifex, the *Standard International Encyclopedia* says this was "the title given by the ancient Romans to members of one of the two celebrated religious colleges. The chief of the order was called Pontifex Maximus. The pontiffs had general control of the official religion, and their head was the highest religious authority in the state. ... Following Julius Caesar the emperor was the Pontifex Maximus. In the time of Theodosius [emperor, died A.D. 395] the title became equivalent to Pope, now one of the titles of the head of the Roman Catholic Church."

Peter refused to accept homage from men—as when Cornelius the Roman centurion fell down at his feet and would have worshipped him, Peter protested quickly and said, "Stand up; I myself also am a man" (Acts 10:25-26). Yet the popes

accept the blasphemous title of "Holy Father" as theirs as a matter of right. And how the cardinals, bishops, and priests do like to set themselves apart from the congregations and to lord it over the people!

Surely if Peter had been a pope, "the supreme head of the church," he would have declared that fact in his general epistles, for that was the place of all others to have asserted his authority. The popes have never been slow to make such claims for themselves, or to extend their authority as far as possible. But instead Peter refers to himself only as an apostle (of which there were eleven others), and as an elder or presbyter, that is, simply as a minister of Christ.

5 Paul's Attitude toward Peter

It is very interesting to notice Paul's attitude toward Peter. Paul was called to be an apostle at a later time, after church had been launched. Yet Peter had nothing to do with that choice, as he surely would have had, if he had been pope. Instead God called and ordained Paul without consulting Peter, as He has called and ordained many thousands of ministers and evangelists since then without reference to the popes of Rome. Paul was easily the greatest of the apostles, with a deeper insight into the way of salvation and a larger revealed knowledge concerning the mysteries of life and death. He wrote much more of the New Testament than did Peter. His thirteen epistles contain 2,023 verses, while Peter's two epistles contain only 166 verses. And if we ascribe the Epistle to the Hebrews to Paul, as does the Roman Catholic Church (Confraternity Version, p. 397), he wrote an even larger proportion. Peter's epistles do not stand first among the epistles, but after those of Paul; and in fact his second epistle was one of the last to be accepted by the church. Paul worked more recorded miracles than did Peter, and he seems to have established more churches than did Peter. Apart from the church at Rome, which we believe was established by laymen, Paul established more prominent and more permanent churches than did Peter. And, so far as the New Testament record goes, Paul's influence in the church at Rome was much greater than was that of Peter. Paul mentions Peter more than once, but nowhere does he defer to Peter's authority, or acknowledge him as pope.

Indeed, quite the contrary is the case. Paul had founded the church at Corinth, but when some there rebelled against his authority, even to the extent of favoring Peter, he does not give even an inch on his own authority. Instead he vigorously defends his authority, declaring, "Am I not an apostle? have I not seen Jesus our Lord?" (1 Corinthians 9:1), and again, "For in nothing was I behind the very chiefest apostles" (2 Corinthians 12:11), or, as translated in the Confraternity Version, "In no way have I fallen short of the most eminent apostles." He declares that he has been "intrusted with the gospel of the uncircumcision, even as Peter with the gospel of the circumcision" (Galatians 2:7). He therefore put himself on a level with all the other apostles. Certainly those ideas were incompatible with any idea of a pope in Paul's day.

But beyond all that, on one occasion Paul publicly rebuked Peter. When Peter at Antioch sided with the "false brethren" (v. 4) in their Jewish legalism and "drew back and separated himself" from the Gentiles and was even the

cause of Barnabas being misled, Paul administered a severe rebuke. We read:

"But when Cephas came to Antioch, I resisted him to the face, because he stood condemned. For before that certain came from James, he ate with the Gentiles; but when they came, he drew back and separated himself, fearing them that were of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that even Barnabas was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Cephas before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest as do the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, how compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" (Galatians 2:11-14).

He then impressed upon Peter some good, sound, evangelical theology, declaring that:

"...a man is not justified by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ... because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (v. 16).

In other words, Paul gave the "Holy Father" a "dressing down" before them all, accusing him of not walking uprightly in the truth of the Gospel. Surely that was no way to talk to a pope! Imagine anyone today, even a cardinal, taking it upon himself to rebuke and instruct a real pope with such language! Just who was Paul that he should rebuke the Vicar of Christ for unchristian conduct? If Peter was the chief it was Paul's duty and the duty of the other apostles to recognize him as such and to teach only what he approved. Obviously Paul did not regard Peter as infallible in faith and morals, or recognize any supremacy on his part.

6 Attitude of the Other Apostles toward Peter

The other apostles as well as Paul seem totally unaware of any appointment that made Peter the head of the church. Nowhere do they acknowledge his authority. And nowhere does he attempt to exercise authority over them. The only instance in which another man was chosen to succeed an apostle is recorded in Acts 1:15-26, and there the choice was made not by Peter but by popular choice on the part the brethren who numbered about one hundred and twenty, and by the casting of lots.

On another occasion Peter, together with John, was sent by the apostles to preach the Gospel in Samaria (Acts 8:14). Imagine the pope today being sent by the cardinals or bishops on any such mission. It is well known that today the popes seldom if ever preach. They do issue statements, and they address select audiences which come to them. But they do not go out and preach the Gospel as did Peter and the other apostles.

The important church council in Jerusalem (Acts 15) reveals quite clearly how the unity of the church was expressed in apostolic days. Differences had arisen when certain men from Judaea came down to Antioch, in Syria, where Paul and Barnabas were working and insisted that certain parts of the Jewish ritual must be observed. Had the present Roman Catholic theory of the papacy been followed, there would have been no need at all for a council. The church in Antioch would have written a letter to Peter, the bishop of Rome, and he

would have sent them an encyclical or bull settling the matter. And of all the churches the one at Antioch was the last that should have appealed to Jerusalem. For according to Roman Catholic legend Peter was bishop in Antioch for seven years before transferring his see to Rome! But the appeal was made, not to Peter, but to a church council in Jerusalem. At that council not Peter but James presided and announced the decision with the words, "Wherefore my judgment is..." (v. 19). And his judgment was accepted by the apostles and presbyters. Peter was present, but only after there had been "much questioning" (v. 7) did he even so much as express an opinion. He did not attempt to make any infallible pronouncements although the subject under discussion was a vital matter of faith. In any event it is clear that the unity of the early church was maintained not by the voice of Peter but by the decision of the ecumenical council which was presided over by James, the leader of the Jerusalem church. Furthermore, after that council *Peter is never again mentioned in the book of Acts.*

It is an old human failing for people to want to exercise authority over their fellow men. We are told that the disciples disputed among themselves which was to be accounted the greatest. Jesus rebuked them with the words: "If any man would be first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all" (Mark 9:35). On another occasion the mother of James and John came to Jesus with the request that her two sons should have the chief places in the kingdom. But He called the disciples to Him and said, "Ye know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Not so shall it be among you: but whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you shall 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" (Matthew 20:25-28). And even on the night in which Christ was delivered up to die they contended among themselves "which of them was accounted to be greatest" (Luke 22:24). In each instance Jesus taught them that they were not to seek to exercise lordship, but rather to excel in service. But in no instance did He settle the dispute by reminding them that Peter was the Prince of the Apostles. In fact they could not have argued that question at all if Peter had already been given the place of preeminence, as the Roman Church holds.

Christ alone is the Head of the church. "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:11). The church is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone" (Ephesians 2:20). Paul says that God "gave him [Christ] to be head over all things to the church, which is his body" (Ephesians 1:22-23). Besides Him there can be no earthly foundation or head of the church. Only a monstrosity can have two heads for one body.

7 Was Peter Ever in Rome?

According to Roman Catholic tradition Peter was the first bishop of Rome, his pontificate lasted twenty-five years, from A.D. 42 to 67, and he was martyred in Rome in A.D. 67. The Douay and Confraternity versions say that he was in Rome before the Jerusalem council of Acts 15, and that he returned to Jerusalem for that council, after which he went to Antioch, and then returned

to Rome. In the Confraternity Version we read:

"After the resurrection the primacy was conferred upon him and immediately after the ascension he began to exercise it. After preaching in Jerusalem and Palestine he went to Rome, probably after his liberation from prison. Some years later he was in Jerusalem for the first church council, and shortly afterward at Antioch. In the year 67 he was martyred in Rome" (Introduction to the First Epistle of St. Peter).

The remarkable thing, however, about Peter's alleged bishopric in Rome, is that the New Testament has not one word to say about it. The word Rome occurs only nine times in the Bible, and never is Peter mentioned in connection with it. There is no allusion to Rome in either of his epistles. Paul's journey to that city is recorded in great detail (Acts 27 and 28). There is in fact no New Testament evidence, nor any historical proof of any kind, that Peter ever was in Rome. All rests on legend. The first twelve chapters of the book of Acts tell of Peter's ministry and travels in Palestine and Syria. Surely if he had gone to the capital of the empire, that would have been mentioned. We may well ask, if Peter was superior to Paul, why does he receive so little attention after Paul comes on the scene? Not much is known about his later life, except that he traveled extensively, and that on at least some of his missionary journeys he was accompanied by his wife—for Paul says, "Have we no right to lead about a wife that is a believer, even as the rest of the apostles, and the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas" (1 Corinthians 9:5). (The Confraternity Version here reads "sister" instead of "wife"; but the Greek word is *gune*, wife, not *adelphē*, sister.)

We know nothing at all about the origins of Christianity in Rome. This is acknowledged even by some Roman Catholic historians. It was already a flourishing church when Paul wrote his letter to the Romans in A.D. 58. Quite possibly it had been founded by some of those who were present in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost and heard Peter's great sermon when some 3,000 were converted, for Luke says that in that audience were "sojourners from Rome, both Jews and proselytes" (Acts 2:10). In any event there is nothing but unfounded tradition to support the claim that Peter founded the church in Rome and that he was its bishop for 25 years. The fact is that the apostles did not settle in one place as did the diocesan bishops of much later date, so that it is quite incorrect to speak of Rome as the "See of Peter," or to speak of the popes occupying "the chair" of St. Peter.

Legend was early busy with the life of Peter. The one which tells of his twenty-five years' episcopate in Rome has its roots in the apocryphal stories originating with a heretical group, the Ebionites, who rejected much of the supernatural content of the New Testament, and the account is discredited both by its origin and by its internal inconsistencies. The first reference that might be given any credence at all is found in the writings of Eusebius, and that reference is doubted even by some Roman Catholic writers. Eusebius wrote in Greek about the year 310, and his work was translated by Jerome. A 17th century historian, William Cave (1637-1713), chaplain to King Charles II of England, in his most important work, *The Lives of the Apostles*, says:

"It cannot be denied that in St. Jerome's translation it is expressly said

that he (Peter) continued twenty-five years as bishop in that city: but then it is as evident that this was his own addition, who probably set things down as the report went in his time, *no such thing being found in the Greek copy of Eusebius.*"

Exhaustive research by archaeologists has been made down through the centuries to find some inscription in the Catacombs and other ruins of ancient places in Rome that would indicate that Peter at least visited Rome. But the only things found which gave any promise at all were some bones of uncertain origin. L. H. Lehmann, who was educated for the priesthood at the University for the Propagation of the Faith, Rome, tells us of a lecture by a noted Roman archaeologist, Professor Marucchi, given before his class, in which he said that no shred of evidence of Peter's having been in the Eternal City had ever been unearthed, and of another archaeologist, Di Rossi, who declared that for forty years his greatest ambition had been to unearth in Rome some inscription which would verify the papal claim that the Apostle Peter was actually in Rome, but that he was forced to admit that he had given up hope of success in his search. He had the promise of handsome rewards by the church if he succeeded. What he had dug up verified what the New Testament says about the formation of the Christian church in Rome, but remained absolutely silent regarding the claims of the bishops of Rome to be the successors of the apostle Peter (cf., *The Soul of a Priest*, p. 10).

And, after all, suppose Peter's bones should be found and identified beyond question, what would that prove? The important thing is, does the Church of Rome teach the same Gospel that Peter taught? Succession to Peter should be claimed, not by those who say they have discovered his bones, but by those who teach the Gospel that he taught—the evangelical message of salvation by grace through faith.

Furthermore, if mere residence conferred superiority, then Antioch would outrank Rome; for the same tradition which asserts that Peter resided in Rome asserts that he first resided in Antioch, a small city in Syria. It is well known that during the time of the apostles and for generations later the Eastern cities and the Eastern church had the greatest influence, and that the Roman church was comparatively insignificant. The first councils were held in Eastern cities and were composed almost altogether of Eastern bishops. Four of the patriarchates were Eastern—Jerusalem, Antioch, Constantinople, and Alexandria. Rome did not gain the ascendancy until centuries later, after the breakup of the Roman empire. If any church had a special right to be called the Mistress of all the churches, it surely was the church in Jerusalem, where our Lord lived and taught, where He was crucified, where Christianity was first preached by Peter and the other apostles, where Peter's great Pentecostal sermon was delivered, and from which went forth to Antioch and Rome and to all the world the glad tidings of salvation. Long before the Reformation Rome's claim to be the only true church was rejected by the eastern churches, which were the most ancient and in the early days much the most influential churches in the world.

Another interesting and very important if not decisive line of evidence in this regard is the fact that Paul was preeminently the apostle to the Gentiles while Peter was preeminently the apostle to the Jews, this division

of labor having been by divine appointment. In Galatians 2:7-8 Paul says that he "had been intrusted with the gospel of the uncircumcision, even as Peter with the gospel of the circumcision (for he that wrought for Peter unto the apostleship of the circumcision wrought for me also unto the Gentiles)." Thus Paul's work was primarily among the Gentiles, while Peter's was primarily among the Jews. Peter ministered to the Jews who were in exile in Asia Minor, "to the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia" (1 Peter 1:1), and in his journeys he went as far east as Babylon, from which city his first epistle (and probably his second) was addressed to the Jewish Christians in Asia Minor: "She that is in Babylon, elect together with you, saluteth you" (1 Peter 5:13). As most of Paul's letters were addressed to churches he had evangelized, so Peter wrote to the Jewish brethren that he had evangelized, who were scattered through those provinces. While there is no Scriptural evidence at all that Peter went west to Rome, here is a plain statement of Scripture that he did go east to Babylon. Why cannot the Roman Church take Peter's word to that effect?

But his testimony, of course, must be circumvented by those who are so anxious to place him in Rome, and they take a curious way to do it. The Confraternity edition has an introductory note to 1 Peter which reads: "The place of composition is given as 'Babylon'... a cryptic designation of the city of Rome."

But there is no good reason for saying that "Babylon" means "Rome." The reason alleged by the Church of Rome for understanding Babylon to mean Rome is that in the book of Revelation Rome is called by that name (Revelation 17:5, 18:2). But there is a great difference between an apocalyptic book such as the book of Revelation, which for the most part is written in figurative and symbolic language, and an epistle such as this which is written in a straightforward, matter-of-fact style.

In regard to Peter's assignment to work among the Jews, it is known that there were many Jews in Babylon in New Testament times. Many had not returned to Palestine after the Exile. Many others, such as those in Asia Minor and Egypt, had been driven out or had left Palestine for various reasons. Josephus says that some "gave Hyrcanus, the high priest, a habitation at Babylon, where there were Jews in great numbers" (Antiquities, Book XV, Ch. II, 2). Peter's assigned ministry to the Jews took him to those places where the Jews were in the greatest numbers, even to Babylon.

8 Paul's Epistle to the Romans

The strongest reason of all for believing that Peter never was in Rome is found in Paul's epistle to the Romans. According to Roman Church tradition, Peter reigned as pope in Rome for 25 years, from A.D. 42 to 67. It is generally agreed that Paul's letter to the Christians in Rome was written in the year A.D. 58, at the very height of Peter's alleged episcopacy there. He did not address his letter to Peter, as he should have done if Peter was in Rome and the head of all the churches, but to the saints in the church in Rome. How strange for a missionary to write to a church and not mention the pastor! That would be an inexcusable affront. What would we think of a minister today who would dare to write to a congregation in a distant city

and without mentioning their pastor tell them that he was anxious to go there that he might have some fruit among them even as he has had in his own community (1:13), that he was anxious to instruct and strengthen them, and that he was anxious to preach the Gospel there where it had not been preached before? How would their pastor feel if he knew that such greetings had been sent to 27 of his most prominent members who were mentioned by name in the epistle (Ch. 16)? Would he stand for such ministerial ethics? And if he were the most prominent minister in the land, as allegedly was the bishop of Rome, such an affront would be all the more inexcusable. This point alone ought to open the eyes of the most obdurate person blinded by the traditions of the Roman Church.

If Peter had been working in the church in Rome for some 16 years, why did Paul write to the people of the church in these words: "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the and ye may be established" (1:11)? Was not that a gratuitous insult to Peter? Was it not a most presumptuous thing for Paul to go over the head of the pope? And if Peter was there and had been there for 16 years, why was it necessary for Paul to go at all, especially since in his letter he says that he does not build on another's foundation: "making it my aim so to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, that I might not build upon another man's foundation" (15:20)? This indicates clearly that Peter was not then in Rome, and that he had not been there, that in fact Paul was writing this letter because no apostle had yet been in Rome to clarify the Gospel to them and to establish them in the faith. At the conclusion of this letter Paul sends greetings to the 27 people mentioned above, including some women, also to several groups. But he does not mention Peter in any capacity.

And again, had Peter been in Rome prior to or at the time when Paul arrived there as a prisoner in A.D. 61, Paul could not have failed to have mentioned him, for in the epistles written from there during his imprisonment—Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon—he gives a complete list of his fellow workers in Rome, and Peter's name is not among them. He spent two whole years there as a prisoner, and received all who came to visit him (Acts 28:30). Nor does he mention Peter in his second epistle to Timothy, which was written from Rome during his second imprisonment, in A.D. 67, the year that Peter is alleged to have suffered martyrdom in Rome, and shortly before his own death (2 Timothy 4:6-8). He says that all his friends have forsaken him, and that only Luke is with him (4:10-11). Where was Peter? If Peter was in Rome when Paul was there as a prisoner, he surely lacked Christian courtesy since he never called to offer aid. Surely he must have been the first absentee bishop on a big scale!

All of this makes it quite certain that Peter never was in Rome at all. Not one of the early church fathers gives any support to the belief that Peter was a bishop in Rome until Jerome in the fifth century. Du Pin, a Roman Catholic historian, acknowledges that "the primacy of Peter is not recorded by the early Christian writers, Justin Martyr (139), Irenaeus (178), Clement of Alexandria (190), or others of the most ancient fathers." The Roman Church thus builds her papal system, not on New Testament teaching, nor upon the facts of history, but only on unfounded traditions.

The chronological table for Peter's work, so far as we can work it out, seems to be roughly as follows:

Most Bible students agree that Paul's conversion occurred in the year A.D. 37. After that he went to Arabia (Galatians 1:17) , and after three years went up to Jerusalem where he remained with Peter for 15 days (Galatians 1:18). That brings us to the year A.D. 40. Fourteen years later he again went to Jerusalem (Galatians 2:1), where he attended the Jerusalem council described in Acts 15, in which Peter also participated (v. 6). This conference dealt primarily with the problems which arose in connection with the presentation of the Gospel in Jewish and Gentile communities. Paul and Barnabas presented their case, and were authorized by the council to continue their ministry to the Gentiles (Acts 15:22-29); and this quite clearly was the occasion on which Paul was assigned to work primarily among the Gentiles while Peter was assigned to work primarily among the Jews (Galatians 2:7-8), since this same Jerusalem council is spoken of in the immediate context (Galatians 2:1-10). So this brings us to the year A.D. 54, and Peter still is in Syria, 12 years after the time that the Roman tradition says that he began his reign in Rome.

Sometime after the Jerusalem council Peter also came to Antioch, on which occasion it was necessary for Paul to reprimand him because of his conformity to Judaistic rituals (Galatians 2:11-21). And the same Roman tradition which says that Peter reigned in Rome also says that he governed the church in Antioch for seven years before going to Rome. Hence we reach the year A.D. 61, with Peter still in Syria! Indeed, how could Peter have gone to Rome, which was the very center of the Gentile world? Would he defy the decision reached by all the apostles and brethren from the various churches who met in the famous first Christian council in Jerusalem? Clearly the Scriptural evidence is that Peter accepted that decision, and that his work was primarily among the Jews of the dispersion, first in Asia Minor, and later as far east as Babylon—that in fact his work took him in the opposite direction from that which Roman tradition assigns to him! And even if Peter had been the first bishop of Rome, that would not mean that the bishops who followed him would have had any of the special powers that he had. The apostles had the power to work miracles and to write inspired Scripture. Even if Peter had been granted special powers above those of the other apostles, there is nothing in Scripture to indicate that those powers could have been transmitted to his successors. In his second epistle he makes a reference to his approaching death (1:14), and surely that would have been the appropriate place to have said who his successor should be and what the method of choosing future bishops should be. But he gives no indication that he even thought of such things. Peter as an apostle had qualifications and gifts which the popes do not have and dare not claim. The fact of the matter is that with the passing of the apostles their place as guides to the church was taken not by an infallible pope but by an inspired and infallible Scripture which had been developed by that time, which we call the New Testament, through which God would speak to the church from that time until the end of the age.

We may be certain that if the humble, spiritually-minded Peter were to come

back to earth he would not acknowledge as his successor the proud pontiff who wears the elaborate, triple-decked, gold bejeweled crown, who wears such fabulously expensive clothing, who is carried on the shoulders of the people who stands before the high altar of worship, who is surrounded by a Swiss military guard, and who receives such servile obedience from the people that he is in effect, if not in reality, worshipped by them. The dedicated Christian minister who serves his people faithfully and humbly, and not the pope, is the true successor of Peter.

9 Conclusion

Let it be understood that we do not seek to minimize or downgrade but only to expose the preposterous claims that the Roman Church makes for its popes and hierarchy. Peter was a prince of God, but he was not the Prince of the Apostles. He, together with the other apostles, Mary, and the early Christians, turned from the religion in which they were born, Judaism, and became simply Christians, followers of Christ. Not one of them was a Roman Catholic. Roman Catholicism did not develop until centuries later.

The doctrine of the primacy of Peter is just one more of the many errors that the Church of Rome has added to the Christian religion. With the exposure of that fallacy the foundation of the Roman Church is swept away. The whole papal system stands or falls depending on whether or not Peter was a pope in Rome, and neither the New Testament nor reliable historical records give any reason to believe that he ever held that position or that he ever was in Rome.

(Continued in [Roman Catholicism By Lorraine Boettner Section Two Chapter VI The Papacy.](#))

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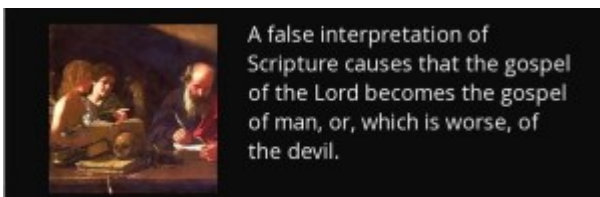
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This is the continuation of the series, **Antichrist And His Ten Kingdoms** – By Albert Close and the previous post, [The Great Harlot's Daughters](#).

God has never in any age sent a messenger or preacher to cross, contradict or make void an interpretation of Holy Scripture revealed to an earlier generation; as for example in the case of the Reformers at the Reformation.

The early Christians believed that Christ's Second Coming was surely to take place in their own days. The Thessalonians even sold their goods and gave up their secular callings and sat down to wait for the return of our Lord.

St. Paul in 2 Thess. 2:1-12 reproves them for being carried away by mistaken teachers. He tells them that the Second Coming could not take place until there came a falling away from the faith of Christ, and the Antichrist, or Man of Sin, should arise. He then describes the character of the coming Antichrist and his monstrous claims and blasphemous pretensions, which have all been perfectly fulfilled by the Popes of Rome. The Pope today claims to be the Vicar of Christ on earth!

In 2 Thess. 2:3-9 St. Paul thus describes the twelve hundred years of falling away during the Dark Ages, and the character of Antichrist during the Dark Ages and since.

2 Thessalonians 2:3 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;

4 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.

5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?
6 And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.
7 For the MYSTERY OF INIQUITY doth already work: only he who now letteth
(hinders) will let (hinder), UNTIL HE BE TAKEN OUT OF THE WAY.
8 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:
9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and
signs and lying wonders,

EXPLANATORY NOTES ON VERSES.

From Irenaeus (A.D. 115-190), the disciple of Polycarp, the contemporary of St. John, we first hear that the hindrance to the full development of Antichrist, mentioned by St. Paul,

A. Revelation 16:12 And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.

Beyond question refers to the drying up of the Turkish Empire, which originated in its infancy as a Mohammedan religious Power at Mecca in 622 A.D. and in 1063 as a Religious Political power at Baghdad, which passed the Euphrates and invaded Asia Minor, Eastern Europe and North Africa. In 1924 the Caliphate or dynasty of Sultans ended and Turkey became a very small Republic. Gibbon says: "The Turks from Baghdad passed over the Euphrates in 1063, and inundated Asia Minor and Eastern Europe." Gibbon-X. p. 352. Note that Gibbon uses the word "inundated"; then read carefully Rev. 8:9, Rev. 16.

B. Revelation 16:13 And I saw *three unclean spirits* like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

This evidently refers to the rise of the *Papal, Fascist and Nazi* Movements of today. These are three outstanding evil movements in the world. These are active, not only in the area of the old Roman earth, but all over the world. The text clearly differentiates between "the earth" and "the whole world." "The Earth" clearly refers to the area of Papal Europe and Mohammedan Eastern Europe, which once formed the Eastern and Western Roman Empires, the area ruled over by the Popes and Sultans. The West is still *secretly* dominated by the Papacy. Mussolini's chief adviser on behalf of the Pope is Father Pietro Tachi-Venturi, a Jesuit, *Daily Express*, 2/9/35.

C. Revelation 16:15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

Verse 15 contains a sharp clear warning shot, like a flash of lightning into the middle of the text at this time. When we see the three evil spirits at work gathering the nations of the world to battle, we should keep a very sharp look-out for the Coming of Christ, lest we be surprised and put to

shame.

D. Revelation 16:16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. This verse reads in the Revised Version "and they gathered them together," not "he gathered them." *Were not these three evil movements in Germany, Italy and Vatican gathering all nations together in the War of Armageddon? We cannot interpret until all has been fulfilled, whether Armageddon is a period of great conflicts, or, a single great battle which will center around the Valley of Armageddon. Armageddon Valley in Palestine is only about 25 miles in length. The Battle of France in May and June 1940 extended over 600 miles in length. As Armageddon is to be the greatest Battle of all history, we must wait until it has been fought before we can interpret this verse unerringly.

* On this false translation has been built up the interpretation of a future Military Antichrist.

THE JESUITS, RIBERA AND BELLARMINE, MIX THE INTERPRETATION OF PROPHECY, 1581–1603.A.D.

In 1576, Gregory XIII. appointed the Jesuit Cardinal Bellarmine to lecture on controversial theology in the new Roman College. He was a man of great learning, and the most powerful controversialist the Roman Church has ever produced. He and Ribera the Jesuit of Salamanca were the leaders in the Movement in the Church of Rome to change the interpretation of Prophecy. At the same time that Ribera published his Futurist commentary on the Apocalypse, Bellarmine published his three volumes of his lectures in the Roman College in the years 1581, 1582, and the third in 1593. Ribera published the three editions of his commentary in 1591, 1592 and 1603. These are now in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

These works called forth a multitude of replies from the Protestant side, including that of Brightman, in England, in 1601.

WHAT RIBERA THE JESUIT WROTE 1591–1603 A.D

Revelation xiv., xvii. and xviii.

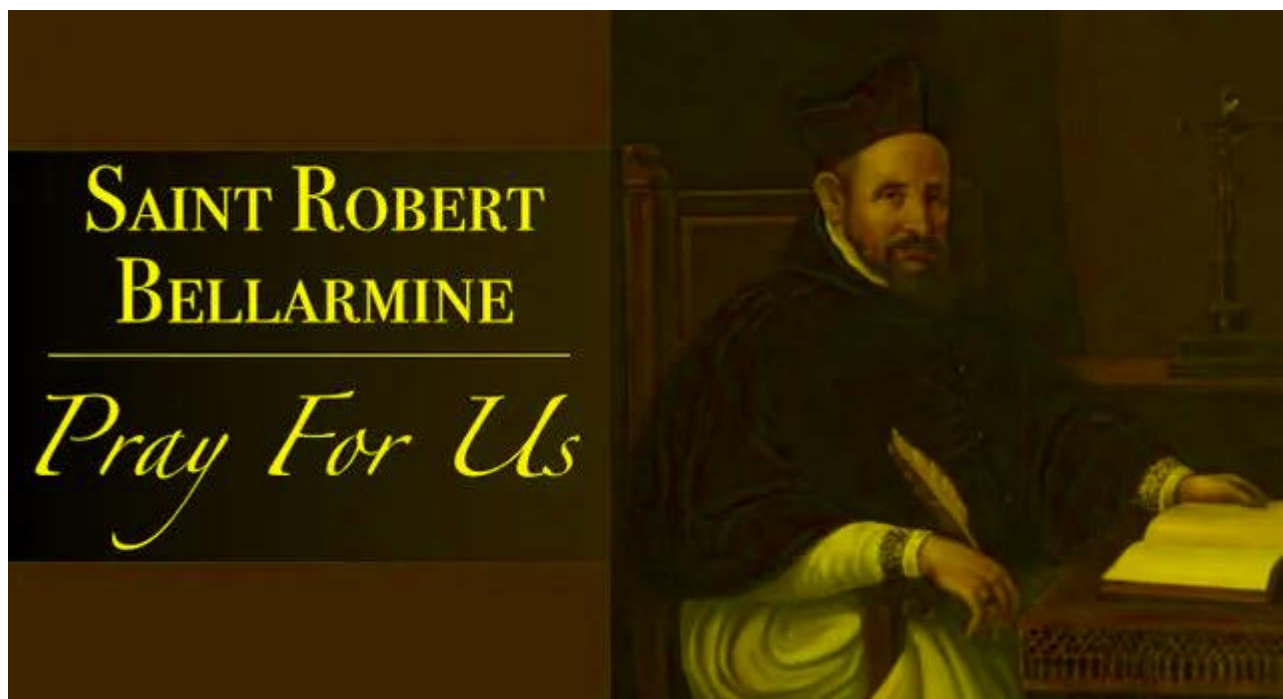
"Babylon whose fall is here predicted, Babylon the purpled Harlot, Babylon the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth, she that has made all nations to drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, this is indeed Rome; but not Rome Christian, not Rome obedient to the Pope, not Rome retaining and preserving within herself the See of the Apostle Peter . . . it is Rome the author and preserver of superstitions, the head of idolatry, the sink of all iniquity, the most bitter enemy of the Christian name, the murderer and slaughterer of the saints . . . such as she will be in the end of the world, after she has fallen away from the Pope." " Apocalypsin, cap. xiv. Ribera Num. 39. Bodleian Library, Oxford.

Bellarmino powerfully supported Ribera, as will be seen by the following extract from his "Disputations and Controversy." The Year Day theory then rising into general notice was first attacked by Bellarmine.

He admits that Rome and her Ten Kingdoms is meant by Babylon in Rev. 17, but denies that it refers to Rome and the Popes, but to a Rome future, not Rome of the present, Here is what Cardinal Bellarmine, S.J., wrote 1586–96, A.D.

The Ten Kings who will share among them the Roman Empire, and in whose reign Antichrist will come, –these will hate the purple-bearing harlot, that is, Rome, and will make her desolate, and burn her with fire. How, therefore, can she be the seat of Antichrist, if at that very time she is to be overthrown and burnt?

Bellarmino continues: “By God’s wonderful Providence when the Roman Empire failed in the West, which was one of the legs of Daniel’s statue, it remained safe in the East, which was the other leg. But because the Eastern Empire was to be destroyed by the Turks, as we have seen, God once more set up in the West, the first leg, that is, the Western Empire, by Charlemagne; and this Empire still exists.”



Jesuit Robert Bellermino, taken from a Catholic website.

Here, therefore is proof positive of the origin of the Futurist Interpretation of Daniel and Revelation. It is not mere hearsay evidence. This was part of the great Jesuit conspiracy of 1551 to destroy the Church of England by mixing the doctrines. The following is a copy of the Secret Instructions issued to the Jesuits of Paris, from the Council of Trent in 1551 A.D.

JESUITS IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND MIXING DOCTRINES AND INTERPRETATIONS.

The following secret Instructions were sent in 1551 A.D. from the Council of Trent to the Jesuits in Paris.

“Ye are not to preach all after one method, but observe the place wherein you come. In England preach any that are contrary to the Holy See of St. Peter,

by which your function will not be suspected, and yet you may still act on the interest of the Mother Church; there being, as the Council are agreed on, no better way to demolish that Church (the Church of England) of heresy than by mixtures of doctrines, and by adding of ceremonies more than be at present permitted. Some of you who undertook to be of this sort of heretical episcopal society, bring it as near to the Mother Church as you can, and be a means to reduce all in time to the Mother Church."

The late Father Hugh Benson, son of an Archbishop of Canterbury, confessed before a vast audience in St. George's Hall, Liverpool, in October, 1907, that whilst a Mirfield monk in the Church of England:—

Father Hugh Benson:—"On every point except the supremacy of the Pope we believed the teaching of the (Roman) Catholic Church, and taught most of her doctrines, as thousands of Anglican clergymen are doing today."

Father Ronald Knox, son of Bishop Knox, followed Benson into the Church of Rome in 1917.

Father Woodlock, the Jesuit, stated that in 1924, that out of 1,345 converts at Westminster, 1,147 were from the High Church of England, and 144 from other Churches.—"Catholic Times," 1/4/27

Father Buggy, of Halifax, states 15 out of 20 converts afterwards leave the Church of Rome.—"Daily Telegraph," 21/10/29. Disillusioned!

Dean Goode, late Dean of Ripon, in "Rome's Tactics," shows that part of Rome's tactics is to send disguised Roman priests to officiate as Church of England clergymen, and gradually introduce her ritual and doctrines.

About 9,000 out of the 12,000 Church of England Clergy are Anglo-Romanists who follow Romish practices and ritual today.

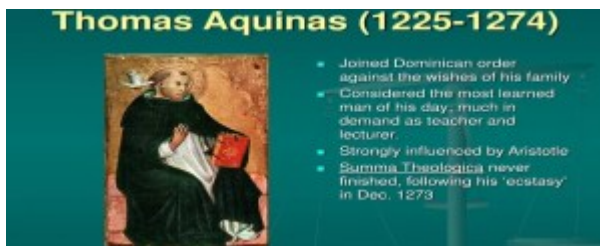
(Continued in [The Scholars Behind the Promotion of the False Interpretations of the Books of Daniel and Revelation.](#))

All sections of Antichrist And His Ten Kingdoms by Albert Close

- [Introduction – The Apostate Church of Rome](#)
- [Revelation 17 – The Prophetic Portrait of the Church of Rome](#)
- [The Character of Antichrist and Papal Persecution of the Saints](#)
- [A Description of the Great Whore of Revelation Chapter 17](#)
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- [The Scholars Behind the Promotion of the False Interpretations of the Books of Daniel and Revelation](#)
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- [The Meaning of 666 in Revelation Chapter 13](#)
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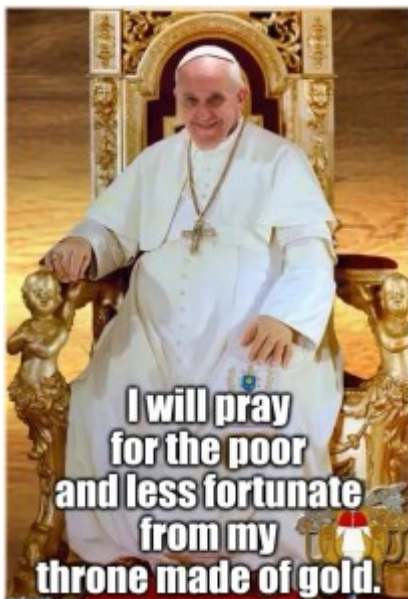
- [British Government Hides Vatican War Treachery From Empire](#)
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 - [The Purple and Scarlet Robes of the Bishops of the Church of Rome](#)
-

[The Influence of Thomas Aquinas – By Former Priest Richard Bennett](#)



Thomas Aquinas, the most learned man in the 13th century, combined Aristotle's pagan philosophy with Roman Catholic Church teaching.

[The Catholic Church And Economics](#)



Opposition of the Catholic church to capitalism has its roots in the Catholic consciousness of the fact that the feudal hegemony of the Catholic church was broken up by the combined power of capitalism and the Protestant Reformation.

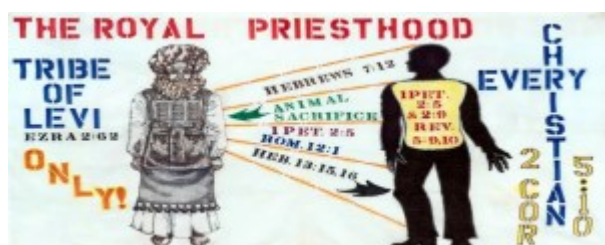
Will the Real Antichrist Please Stand Up

According to the Bible, which of the below is the Antichrist likely to look like?



A true biblical description of the Antichrist based on history.

A Kingly Priesthood



The history of the Popes is in direct contradiction to the teaching of Peter. Instead of following Peter, the Popes have imitated the Caesars of the Roman empire and the Pontifex Maximus of the pagan religion of Rome, whose title they appropriated.

When The Pope Blesses



Pope Benedict XV was the Pope of the Catholic Church from 1914 to 1922. When he blessed certain people his “blessings” turned into curses on every one he blessed!

The Papal Church a Political Machine

The Church and Politics

- Many people left land to the church when they died- making the church one of the largest landholders in Europe (divided up this land into fiefs)
- All church clergy, bishops and abbots were involved in politics
 - They often advised local rulers
 - Some were so involved with politics that they had little time dealing with church affairs



So political is the Catholic Church that its religious aspect is a negligible quantity. In the Vatican the religious aspect of any question is little thought of. The officials of the Church there are not interested in true religion.

Are Indulgences Still Being Sold?



One of the historic abuses that fired the indignation of Martin Luther was the sale of indulgences. They are still being covertly sold today.

[Biblical Unity or Papal Conformity?](#)



By Michael de Semlyen and Richard Bennett

Papal Penitence

On Sunday, March 12, 2000, the first Sunday of Lent, the Pope presided over a solemn ceremony called “The Day of Pardon” in St. Peter’s Basilica, Rome, in which he asked God for forgiveness for the historical wrongs of the Roman Catholic Church (RCC). The ceremony was presented as another profoundly significant event in the RC Church’s “Millennium Jubilee Holy Year” and a further step, unprecedented but necessary, in the process of unity. It was a modern media event staged for maximum impact to encourage “unity”. The impression given is that it is a genuine attempt to wipe the slate clean and to apologize for the past wrongs of the Church.

Careful examination, however, shows that the Pope’s “Day of Pardon” was in fact not an apology, but rather a day of deception. In this service, the Pope continually prayed, purportedly as a Christian, while never admitting any of the horrendous sins of the Church of Rome. An egregious example from the prepared text that was used is found in Section III, “Confession of Sins Which Have Harmed the Unity of the Body of Christ”.¹ The set prayer of the representative of the Roman Curia was as follows, “Let us pray that our

recognition of the sins which have rent the unity of the Body of Christ and wounded fraternal charity will facilitate the way to reconciliation and communion among all Christians." This was followed by silent prayer, and then the prayer of "The Holy Father" addressed to the "Merciful Father",

Merciful Father, on the night before his Passion your Son prayed for the unity of those who believe in him: in disobedience to his will, however, believers have opposed one another, becoming divided, and have mutually condemned one another and fought against one another. We urgently implore your forgiveness and we beseech the gift of a repentant heart, so that all Christians, reconciled with you and with one another will be able, in one body and in one spirit, to experience anew the joy of full communion. We ask this through Christ our Lord."

If the Pope and the Roman Curia were really serious about their prayer offered to Holy God, they must face the fact that condemning curses of their Council of Trent were not mentioned nor repented of, including the condemnation of the Biblical Gospel and historical biblical Christianity, which led to the wholesale slaughter of millions of Christians during the 667 years of the Inquisition, and which have never been revoked, Vatican Council II notwithstanding. If this prayer were answered, it would be necessary to dismantle the RCC with its false gospel, papal infallibility, and "irreformable"² ways, which clearly the Pope and his Curia have no intention of doing.

"The Week of Christian Unity"

The gathering of mainstream churches at St. Paul's Basilica in Rome earlier this year is thought to have been the largest assembly of Christian leaders with a Pope since the Vatican Council II in the early 1960s. On January 18th, the Tuesday of the week which had been designated 'The Week of Christian Unity' in the 'Holy Year, 2000', leaders representing four fifths of Eastern Orthodoxy gathered alongside Anglicans, Lutherans, Methodists and Pentecostals. They were participating in celebration of the opening of the 'Holy Door at St. Paul Outside the Walls'. Archbishop George Carey, Primate of the Church of England, and Metropolitan Athanasius, representing Bartholomew, Patriarch of Constantinople and head of the Orthodox Church, knelt on either side of Pope John Paul II before the newly opened door. Only one cushion had been provided as it was thought that only the Pope would kneel, but when they both fell to their knees, too, the Pope called out, "Unity! Thank you!" It was a highly symbolic moment.

The Pontiff had every reason to express his gratitude to the Churches represented and the two men flanking him. After all, in May 1999, the joint Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) had issued a statement "recognizing the Pope as the overall authority in the Christian World" and describing him as "a gift to be received by all Churches", (a gift yet to be accepted by the Synod of the Church of England and the wider Anglican Communion, however). Five months later in October, 1999, on Reformation Day, the Roman Catholic and Lutheran Churches had signed a joint declaration announcing that their opposing views on justification have been reconciled.³ With this declaration of reconciliation and unity, the way seems

clear for the Lutherans to join the Anglicans in accepting Papal primacy. The frosty relationship of earlier years with the Russian Orthodox Church has warmed up, and a Papal visit to Moscow and a meeting with Patriarch Alexy II is being discussed. Pentecostals and Charismatics have accelerated their Rome-ward journey and Evangelical leaders who have signed ECT ("Evangelicals and Catholics Together") have led very large numbers of Evangelicals to kneel before the open "holy" door that the Roman Catholic Church offers them.

The Pope's words that day were couched in the language associating equality with freedom. Carefully concealed in his response was the non-negotiable agenda of the Roman Catholic Church, for rather than looking for unity based on truth, the Papacy, as ever, is seeking to secure conformity through compromise. The "ecumenical dialogue" referred to by the Pope during the January 18th ceremony, is clearly governed by a special set of rules. Vatican Council II's postconciliar Document No. 42 on ecumenism states that "...dialogue is not an end in itself...it is not just an academic discussion."⁴ Rather,

"ecumenical dialogue...serves to transform modes of thought and behavior and the daily life of those [non-Catholic] communities. In this way, it **aims at preparing the way for their unity of faith in the bosom of a Church one and visible.**"⁵

That the papacy expects this process of dialogue to take time to accomplish its stated aim of bringing all Christian churches under its authority is clear when she says,

"...little by little, as the obstacles to perfect ecclesial communion are overcome, **all Christians will be gathered, in a common celebration of the Eucharist [the Mass] into that unity of the one and only Church.**...This unity, we believe, dwells in the Catholic Church as something we can never lose."⁶

The "little by little" approach of the Vatican II document are now giant steps.

How many present at the January 18th gathering understand what is really happening? The Pope's official position is that "ecumenical encounter is not merely an individual work, but also a task of the [RC] Church, **which takes precedence over all individual opinions.**"⁷ Thus the opinions of others present on January 18th are "individual opinions" and worthless. The final goal of any dialogue with the RCC is, first and foremost, "unity" in a visible and specific ritual. Under the authority of the Roman Catholic Church, "all Christians will be gathered, **in a common celebration of the Eucharist** into that unity of the one and only Church...unity we believe dwells in the Catholic Church as something she can never lose." She could hardly state it more clearly.

Unity: True and False

Very different from this man-made spurious unity is the true unity of believers in Christ. The foundation of Christian unity is the position of believers "*in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ.*"⁸ The Lord's

prayer in John 17:21 for unity is answered in the life of an individual who is justified by God's saving grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. The fact that the Lord Jesus Christ prayed for unity means that unity of believers is actual. God, the Father of His people, Who before the world existed chose the believers to be in Christ His Son, justified them through His righteousness, and upon saving them, places them in Him, and will preserve them in that unity unto the culmination of all things. Believers are placed into the unity which is in Christ Jesus, a unity which they themselves did not establish, but which they are commanded to maintain. In the words of the Apostle Paul, they are *"to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."*⁹

True Ecumenism

The same Apostle shows clearly the ground of true unity. *"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."*¹⁰ Believers, therefore, who adhere to God only and His Written Word, as did the Lord and the Apostles after Him ('Sola Scriptura') are one in body, in Spirit, and in truth. They are saved before the all-Holy God by grace alone ('Sola Gratia'), through faith alone ('Sola Fide'), and in Christ alone ('Solo Christo'), and all glory and praise is to God alone ('Soli Deo Gloria'). These five biblical principles together show the foundation of true unity in the Lord. They have helped the persecuted church through the centuries to hold fast to the simplicity of the Gospel. True ecumenism is fellowship or working together in adherence to the five basic biblical principles that maintain the foundation of true unity in the Lord. To the degree to which these key basic biblical standards are embraced, true unity will be evident.

False Ecumenism

On the other hand, false ecumenism, typically institutionalised, is the joining together for common causes of professing Christian groups, when in fact one or more of the parties involved are unconverted. While purporting to confess the Lord Jesus Christ according to the Scriptures, for the most part the five biblical principles that display the basis of true unity in the Lord are compromised. The extent to which these principles are not upheld usually shows the inclination of the church or group to submit to Rome.

The World Council of Churches is such an institution. Within it, there is no agreement on any of the five principles that demonstrate the fact that the foundation of true unity is in the Lord Jesus Christ alone. The Pope and his Church, likewise in apostasy from the true Gospel, are also without any of the five biblical standards. Counterfeiting the body of the Lord Jesus Christ, they are intent on finding successful ways to bind all to the very visible, active and attractive pontifical throne.

Pope Defines Conformity

In his official letter, "That they May Be One", the Pope defines full unity,

"The Catholic Church, both in her praxis and in her solemn documents, holds that the communion of the particular Churches with the Church of Rome, and of their Bishops with the Bishops of Rome is, in God's plan, an essential requisite of full and visible communion."¹¹

To arrive at that point of full unity, a different set of five principles must be adopted—principles that actually deny all five parameters of biblical truth. According to the Pope, "It is already possible to identify the areas in need of fuller study before a true consensus of faith can be achieved:

- (1) the relationship between Sacred Scripture, as the highest authority in matters of faith, and Sacred Tradition, as indispensable to the interpretation of the Word of God;
- (2) the Eucharist, as the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, an offering of praise to the Father, the sacrificial memorial and Real Presence of Christ and the sanctifying outpouring of the Holy Spirit;
- (3) Ordination, as a Sacrament, to the threefold Ministry of the episcopate, presbyterate and diaconate;
- (4) the Magisterium of the Church, entrusted to the Pope and the Bishops in communion with him, understood as a responsibility and an authority exercised in the name of Christ for teaching and safeguarding the faith;
- (5) the Virgin Mary, as Mother of God and Icon of the Church, the spiritual Mother who intercedes for Christ's disciples and for all humanity."¹²

The Pope's objective in declaring his five principles is that a ubiquitous visible conformity to the Church of Rome should be forged in accordance with and manifested through her institution alone. Thus the Pope decrees,

"...it is now necessary to advance towards **the visible unity** which is required and sufficient and which is manifested in a real and concrete way, so that the Churches may truly become a sign of that full communion in the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church **which will be expressed in the common celebration of the Eucharist.**"¹³

The RCC is attempting to forge a man-made unity, visible by means of an institution to which all must conform. Such a conception stands in direct contradiction to the reality of believers who, having been placed invisibly in Christ by God, are to maintain the bond of unity given them by the Holy Spirit.

External Unity to be Attained by Power and Penalty

What is this conformity now so passionately advocated by the Pope? How would it be applied in practice? From all previous experience, and the official teaching of the same Pope in his Canon Law, those fully participating will be obliged to submit their faculties of both mind and will to 'the Holy Father' [the Pope], to his decrees, and to the dogma of his Church. Thus present day Roman law decrees,

Canon 752 "A religious respect of intellect and will, even if not the assent of faith, is to be paid to the teaching which the Supreme Pontiff or the college of bishops enunciate on faith or morals when they exercise the

authentic magisterium even if they do not intend to proclaim it with a definitive act..."

In this official law Rome enunciates, in clearer terms than any cult states, the necessity of suppressing one's God given faculties, that of mind and will. This is not only demanded, the new Canon Law, the 'Papal Code' codified by the present Pope, includes a section entitled "Punishment of Offenses against Ecclesiastical Authorities and the Freedom of the Church". Under the heading, "The Punishment of Offenses in General", the Inquisition appears again as from old times, for Canon 1311 states,

"The Church has an innate and proper right **to coerce** offending members of the Christian faithful by means of penal sanctions."¹⁴

A brief acquaintance with history readily reveals that coercion is a term that the Roman Church understands very well. Naturally, when ushering all comers into her big tent, she makes light of its implications; but when once again in direct control of the levers of political power (which may well be provided by the fast advancing European super state), Canon 1311 could acquire that same notoriety as those that have so darkened the pages of history.

It is important to remember always that the Roman Papacy is an absolute monarchy and also a secular government. Enormously wealthy, it has territorial sovereignty, its court, nobles, and diplomatic corps; its detective force and secret service; its laws, advocates, and system of jurisprudence as well as prison; taxes, bank, foreign treaties and concordats, enormous political influence, ambitious plans and policies, all as much as any secular kingdom. And it still has the Inquisition, now styled the Office of the Doctrine of the Faith, headed by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger.

Bride of the Lamb Understands Apostate Church

Believers of old were clear to call the Roman Catholic Church's imposed conformity "Satan's seat" or the Antichrist. This was known and spoken of even through the Middle Ages by Dante Alighieri (d. 1321), John Wycliff (d. 1384), John Huss (d. 1415), Savonarola (d. 1498), and William Tyndale (c. 1536). So Rome's conformity was described as Antichrist from the time of Reformation by Martin Luther (d. 1546), Nicholas Ridley (d. 1554), John Bradford (d. 1555), and John Foxe (d. 1587), and in more recent times by Isaac Newton (d. 1727) and Jonathan Edwards

(d. 1758). Now as the "Holy" Roman Empire revives in the European Superstate, can believers afford to remain ignorant of both history and Biblical prophecy as understood throughout the centuries? Confident believers of old saw that unity is in Christ and, consequently, warned of the conformity with Rome. They both knew the true church in Christ, and recognised the apostate Church in Rome. Understanding that unity with the Roman Catholic Church always meant submission to her traditions and finally obedience to her Pope, they rejoiced that their unity was in the Beloved, rather than dallying with sin.

Pope Identified

Extravagantly, apparently without trembling, the Pope has again fulfilled the Lord's prophetic Word (II Thessalonians 2:3-12) depicting the Man of Sin and Son of Perdition. The sitting Pope purports to take for himself a Divine position. Thus in Section III of the prepared program for the "Day of Pardon", "The Holy Father" is mentioned eight times. Nonetheless in the RCC, this title does not denote the All Holy One in heaven, but rather the sitting Pope. Seen in the light of Scripture, the RCC Pope who claims to be Christian, clearly is one "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, showing himself that he is God" (v. 4). The Pope of the RCC goes further when by taking to himself the title of "The Vicar of Christ", he presumes to take the place of Christ Himself, teacher, shepherd, and priest. This also is clearly tantamount to "as God sit[ting] in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." The assertion is not simply made, for the Pope's law gives it teeth in exacting submission of mind and will and promising punitive action against those who fail to obey, as Canon 752 and 1311 document. He is the worst and greatest enemy of Christ who under the pretence of service to Christ, presumes to undermine His unique offices by covertly usurping His position and power.

C. H. Spurgeon clearly understood these things. His timely words still apply,

Since he was cursed who rebuilt Jericho, much more the man who labours to restore Popery among us. In our fathers' days the gigantic walls of Popery fell by the power of their faith, the perseverance of their efforts, and the blast of their gospel trumpets; and now there are some who would rebuild that accursed system upon its old foundation. O Lord, be pleased to thwart their unrighteous endeavours, and pull down every stone, which they build. It should be a serious business with us to be thoroughly purged of every error which may have a tendency to foster the spirit of Popery; and when we have made a clean sweep at home we should seek in every way to oppose its all to rapid spread abroad in the church and in the world.¹⁵

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1 www.vatican.va/jubilee_2000/jubilevents/events_day_pardon

2 "This infallibility, however, with which the divine redeemer wished to endow his Church in defining doctrine pertaining to faith and morals...the Roman Pontiff...enjoys...when...he proclaims in an absolute decision...For this reason his definitions are rightly said to be irreformable by their very nature..." No. 28, Lumen Gentium, in Vatican Council II The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents, Austin Flannery, Ed., 1981 ed. (Northport, NY: Costello Publ. Co., 1975) p. 380.

3 See Richard Bennett's analysis, "The Roman Catholic-Lutheran 'Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification': A Denial of the Gospel and the Righteousness of Christ".

4 Flannery, No. 42, "Reflections and Suggestions Concerning Ecumenical

Dialogue", S.P.U.C., 15 August 1975, p.549.

5 Ibid., pp. 540-1. Bolding in any quotation indicates emphasis added in this paper.

6 Ibid., p. 541.

7 Ibid., p. 545.

8 1 Thessalonians 1:1.

9 Ephesians 4:3.

10 Ephesians 4:4-6.

11 Ut Unum Sint, "That They May Be One: On Commitment to Ecumenism", John Paul II (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference) Publ. No. 5-050, Para. 97.

12 Ibid., Para. 79.

13 Ibid., Para. 78.

14 Code of Canon Law, Latin-English Edition (Washington, DC: Canon Law Society of America, 1983).

15 Morning and Evening, on Joshua 6:26

[The Secret Power Of The Jesuits By J. J. Murphy](#)



A short history of the Jesuit Order which sheds light on what the Jesuits are doing today.

Was Peter The First Pope?



The Catholic church falsely claims that Peter was the first bishop of the church in Rome, and all power was handed down to the bishops or popes of that city.

The Antichrist Is Hidden In Plain Sight

According to the Bible, which of the below is the Antichrist likely to look like?



Without exception all the leaders of the Protestant Reformation looked at the Popes of Rome as the man of sin who sits as God in the temple of God – the Church – shewing himself that he is God.

Poisoning The Catholic Bible With Anti-Semitism

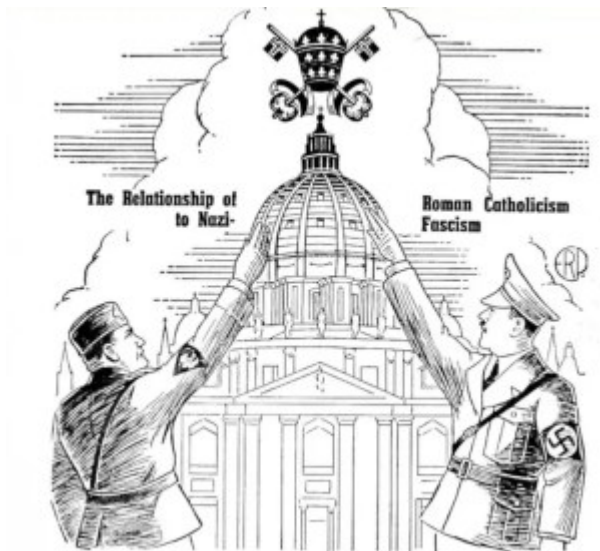
Social Justice, Aug. 1, 1938

quently, the vast majority of Jews most certainly is in no wise associated with the conspiracy against civilization and Christianity, even though a few are

In Chapter 2 of the Apocalypse, Verse 9, it is read: "Thou art blasphemed by them that say they are Jews and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan." It appears from this text that those who belong to the synagogue of Satan and who are plotting against the Christian community

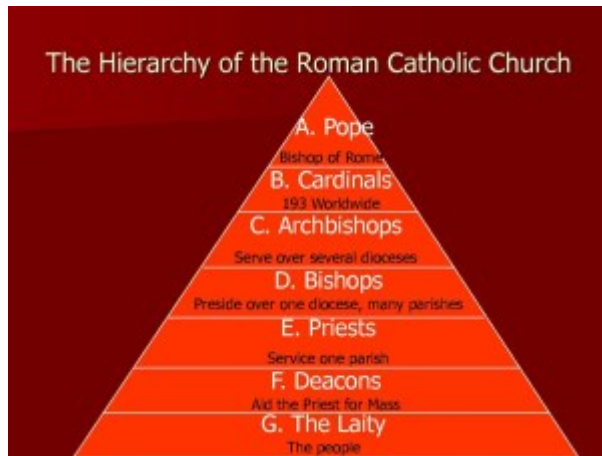
The popes of Rome , the Vatican and the Jesuits want you to think New World Order conspiracy is "Judaeo-Masonic" to deflect blame away from themselves!

How The Popes Treated The Jews by Leo H. Lehmann



The popes of Rome are the primary sources of antisemitism. True Bible believing Christians do not hate the Jewish people but neither should we support Zionism.

Religion As A System Of Power



Religion can uplift its devotees only if its worship is upward, if the image and object of its devotion are above the level of man. It is an historic fact that religions which have descended to the deification of creatures, whether of men or animals, have degraded, enslaved and impoverished their believers.

Papal Abuse of Power



The Apostle Peter plainly decreed that the method of governing the Christian Church must not be patterned after that of Caesar. The popes of Rome totally disregard Peter's admonition.