Dear Friend,

The first business of the adversary of God and enemy of mankind was to cast doubt on the veracity of God and the certainty of His Word. It was introduced in the form of a question, *"Yea, hath God said."* The grand lie of the Serpent insinuated itself into the mind of an innocent being and provoked the act of rebellion that led to the death of man. Unlike Eve who was deceived in the transgression, the sin of her husband Adam as the covenant head of our race lay in openly rejecting the authority of God the Creator and refusing the rule of His Word. From that day to our own, the core thrust of the wicked alliance between sinful men and evil angels has consisted in obliterating the Divine testimony by turning "the truth of God into a lie." (Romans 1 18-32)

With this in mind, we have prepared a paper on the very foundations of our Christian faith: The Written Word of God as our final authority in all matters. Psalm 11 verse 3 says, "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" The whole groundwork of our faith in the grace of God, of the Divine glory, and of our oneness in Christ, is all challenged by the Roman Catholic system. That institution rejects the sole authority of the revealed written Word of God and imposes its empty traditions, authoritarian structures, and the orders of its "infallible" Popes on its adherents. By this means, multitudes of souls are robbed of all genuine hope and confidence in the salvation that is in Christ Jesus.

We sincerely pray that this article might be graciously used of the Lord to stimulate thinking and refresh faith among believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. We ask that you would make this article known to others and have it placed on Web pages. In the present fog of false ecumenism that envelops us, let us all pray that the Word of God would again be seen brilliantly as the Spirit of the Lord has given it to us in His glorious Word of Truth.

Your servants for Christ's sake,
Richard Bennett and Robert Nicholson

The Certainty of the Written Word of Truth

Truth and the Scripture

The Lord Jesus Christ, in His great high priestly prayer, declared clearly the truth of God's Word. He said, "*Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*" God's Word not only contains the truth but rather it is truth itself. This is consistent with the declarations throughout the Old Testament in which the Holy Spirit continually proclaimed that the revelation from God is truth, as for example Psalm 119:142, "*thy law is truth."* The Lord Himself therefore identified truth with the Written Word. There is no source, other than written Scripture alone, to which the statement, "*thy word is truth"* can apply. That source alone, the Holy Scripture, is the believer's standard of truth.

In the New Testament, it is the Written Word of God, and that alone, to which the Lord Jesus Christ and His apostles refer as the final authority. In the temptation, the Lord Jesus three times resisted Satan, saying, "*It is written."* For example, in Matthew 4:4, "*he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."* In stating, "*It is written*", the Lord used the very phrase that is used in the Holy Bible eighty times. The prevalence of this repeated phrase underlines its importance. The Lord's complete acceptance of the authority of the Written Word is evident in His words found in Matthew 5:17-18,

"Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfill. For verily, I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled."

Other sources of authority condemned

Christ Jesus continually castigated and rebuked the Pharisees because they placed their tradition on a par with the Word of God. He condemned them because they were attempting to corrupt the very basis of truth by equating their traditions to the Word of God. He declared to them "[You are] *making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such things do ye"* (Mark 7:13). These traditions of the Pharisees were precepts, ordinances, and rules of religious belief and practice that had been developed by learned religious teachers over time. They had been passed on by word of mouth and by selectively edited writings. These traditions, oral and written, formed a body of cultural material that became an official set of interpretations and rituals for religious life. Even the clear teaching of the Holy Scripture was being sifted through them and modified to suit men's tastes and preferences. Furthermore, in refuting the errors of the Sadducees, the Scripture records the Lord saying, *"Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God"* (Matthew 22:29*).* Unlike the Pharisees, who mistakenly considered themselves the loyal followers of Moses, the Sadducees were a radical party of religious liberals who had appropriated the thinking of Greek agnostic philosophers. They manufactured beliefs on the basis of what seemed reasonable to them rather than what had been revealed by God in His Word. However, since Scripture alone is inspired,[1] it alone is the ultimate authority, and it alone is the final judge of all human traditions and reasoning. The Word of the Lord says as a commandment in Proverbs 30:5, 6, "*Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar."* God commands that we are not to add to His Word: This command shows emphatically that it is God's Word—and God's Word alone—that is pure and uncontaminated.

Aligned with Proverbs, the Lord's strong, clear declaration in Isaiah 8:20 is: "*To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.*" The truth is this: since God's written word alone is breathed out by Him[2], it and it alone is the sole rule of faith. It cannot be otherwise. Any who contradict Scripture, or attempt to assign it an inferior position in the life of faith, may safely be accounted as liars and deceivers bent on moving God off His throne that they may occupy it themselves.

The expression "Sola Scriptura"

From the time of the giving of the Ten Commandments on Mt. Sinai, when the Holy God wrote with His finger on the tablets of stone (Exodus 31:18), until this present day, the written word of God has been extant in the world. The term "Sola Scriptura" or "the Bible alone" as the measure of truth is short hand for saying that Scripture is the only point of reference for finding out what is to be believed about God and what duty God requires of man. The very phrase "It is written" means exclusively transcribed, and not hearsay. The command to believe what is written means we are to receive only the pure word of God. It separates out from all other sources,

the body of truth that we are to believe. What is at stake before the All Holy God is His incorruptible truth. For men, what is at stake is certainty, in the words of Proverbs 22:21 *"That I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth."* Certainty is needed for the sal-

[1] II Timothy 3:16 "*All scripture is given by inspiration of God*…." Inspiration in Greek is *theopneustos*, literally meaning, "breathed out", that is, Scripture is breathed out by God as His Word.
[2] Psalms 12:6, 18:30, 119:128, 140; Romans 7:12.

vation of immortal souls. In the very last commandment in the Bible God resolutely tells us not to add to nor take away from His Word.

> *"For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book: If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the Book of Life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."* (Revelation 22:18-19)

The principle of interpretation

The principle of "Sola Scriptura" is consistent with the very way in which the word of truth that comes from God says it is to be interpreted, as Psalm 36:9 explains, "*For with thee is the fountain of life; in thy light we see light.*" God's truth is seen in the light of God's truth. This is exactly the same as the Apostle Paul says, "*Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*[3]" It is precisely in the light which God's truth sheds, that His truth is seen. Scripture provides its own sufficient rule of interpretation.

The Apostle Peter, under the impulse of the Holy Spirit, declares, "*Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation. For prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*"[4] Logically then, Peter makes it very clear that in order to maintain the purity of Holy God's written word, the source of interpretation must be from the same pure source as the origin of the Scripture itself. Scripture can only be understood correctly in the light of Scripture, since it alone is uncorrupted. It is only with the Holy Spirit's light that Scripture can be comprehended correctly. The Holy Spirit causes those who are the Lord's to understand Scripture.[5]

Since the Spirit does this by Scripture, obviously, it is in accord with the principle that Scripture itself is the infallible rule of interpretation of its own truth: *"it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth"* (I John 5:6). Those sincerely desiring to be true to Lord in this very matter of the standard of "Sola Scriptura" must turn to the Lord to obey His command, *"Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you*."[6] If one is yearning for truth in this essential matter, in the attitude of Psalm 51:17, "*with a broken and a contrite heart*", the Lord God will not despise, but reveal to him or her the basic foundation where the Lord Christ Jesus and the Apostles stood. In the words of the Apostle John, "*This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true*."[7] The Apostle John wrote, as did Peter and Paul, in order that those who are saved should know that his testimony is true.

The sufficiency and clarity of Scripture

The total sufficiency of Scripture is declared by the Apostle Paul, "*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*."[8] For final truth and authority, all that is needed is the Scripture. This is because the Word of God bears its own spiritual rule of historical-grammatical interpretation. Sections that initially appear obscure because of our lack of understanding, are clarified by other parts where meanings are made plain. The Holy Spirit Himself is given to the believer so that by prayer and diligent comparative study, knowledge of the Gospel and the will of God is made

[3] I Corinthians 2:13.
[4] II Peter 1:20, 21.
[5] John 14:16, 17, 26.
[6] Proverbs 1:23.
[7] John 21:24.
[8] II Timothy 3:16, 17.

plain to him. It is this means alone, comparing Scripture with Scripture under the illuminating ministry of the Holy Spirit, that safeguards the renewed reader from the danger of imaginative self-centered mystical deceit and the errors propagated by religious fanaticism and cultic heresies. Natural men, those not made alive by the Holy Spirit and indwelt by Him, have only their darkened understandings to guide them.[9]

The Scriptures are so plain that even a child can come to faith through the Written Word. The Apostle Paul writes to Timothy, *"And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."*[10] Much of the Bible is quite plain and straightforward. For example John 3:36 says, *"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."* There is no mystical or hidden meaning in this verse, as in most of Scripture.

The claim that Sola Scripture was not possible

In an attempt to justify tradition as an authority, an appeal is often made to the very last verse in John's gospel where it is stated, *"And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen*."[11] Of course, there were many deeds and sayings of the Lord that are not recorded in Scripture. But Scripture is the authoritative record that the Holy God has given His people. We do not have a single sentence that is authoritatively from the Lord, outside of what is in the written word of the New Testament. To appeal to a tradition for authority when the Holy God did not give it is futile. The idea that somehow sayings and events from the Lord had been passed on by word of mouth, and so preserved reliably in tradition is simply not true. Given the fluid nature of language, the fragility of verbal communication, and the reconstructive nature of human memory, such a claim is ludicrous in the extreme. Simply to believe in the traditions of men is superstitious naivety of spirit combined with an irrational gullibility. The Bible even gives us an example of a false tradition already at work at the time of John's writing of his Gospel. In John 21:23, John refutates a false tradition, a "saying [note that it is not "written"] abroad among the brethren" going around the church that the Lord would return before John died.

Another desperate attempt to justify tradition is the claim that the early church did not have the New Testament. However, the Apostle Peter speaks about the writings of the Apostle Paul when he states, *"...even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction*."[12] Peter also declares that he was writing so that the believers could remember what he said. So he wrote, *"Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth*."[13]

From the earliest times a substantial part of the New Testament was available. Under the inspiration of the Lord, the Apostle Paul commands his letters to be read in other churches besides those to which they were sent. This clearly shows that the written word of God was being circulated even while the Apostles lived. The Lord's command to believe what is written has always been something that the believers could and did obey. In this matter one must have the humility commanded in the Scripture not to think above what is written: *"...*

[9] Proverbs 4:19, 1 Corinthians 2:14
[10] II Timothy 3:15
[11] John 21:25.
[12] II Peter 3:15, 16.
[13] II Peter 1:12.

that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another."[14]

The absurd rationale that because the early Church did not have the New Testament we need tradition ignores two very simple facts concerning God's provision for the early church. In the first place,before the canon of the New Testament was complete, the Apostles were present as Christ's personally commissioned ambassadors, and thus He endorsed their authority as teachers as being from Himself. Second, even during the transitional stages of establishing the New Testament body of believers, the Apostles had no difficulty preaching the Gospel from the Old Covenant Scriptures, nor using them as an authoritative guide for that period in matters of faith and morals.[15] The New Testament writings were incorporated and received into the canon of Holy Scripture when the last surviving Apostle had completed his work. Written revelation was at an end because the final prophetic word on salvation had been given in and from the Lord Jesus Christ.[16] No further Word from heaven could have been given, nor should any more have been expected, then or now.[17] The Gospels are the record of His first advent in the flesh; the Acts, His coming in the Spirit; the letters are the inspired comment on them. The book of Revelation is His Second Advent and preceding instruction and events. The documentation is finished and complete.

The regulation and the believer's love of God

The Lord brings the topic of truth to bear on the believer's love for Him. This again underscores its importance. "*Jesus answered and said to him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings; and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent Me*."[18] And again, "*Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words shall not pass away*."[19] Living His own life in this world to the glory of His Father, the Lord Jesus could say "*he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him*."[20] In His supreme aim to please His Father, Christ looked to the authority and direction of the Scriptures alone. He confirmed the very message of the Old Testament, "*The law of the LORD is perfect*."[21]

The believer is to be true to the way of the Lord, holding alone to what is written: "*Thy Word is truth.*" All true disciples therefore must acknowledge that there is an absolute measure by which a thing may be judged to be truth or falsehood, and either pleasing or displeasing to God. In times past, that standard was called "the rule of faith" or "the basis of truth," meaning the measure by which truth is known. This principle is, as is clearly demonstrated in both the Old and New Testaments, that the written word of God *itself* is the basis of truth. It is not possible to own the Lord Jesus Christ as Master and then refuse the rule of the Father's Word in and by Him.[22] There are no halfway houses here in which the vacuous pretence of an anti-biblical piety can find safe-haven. It is a clear choice. If you love God you love His Word alone, not His Word plus the words of men. You cannot say you love God and despise His Word, for the marks of authentic spiritual affection are patent in the Word it-

[14] I Corinthians 4:6.
[15] Acts 17:3, 18:28, 28:23; Galatians 3:8; Romans 9:17.
[16] Hebrews 1:1, 2.
[17] Revelation. 1:1, 2.
[18] John 14:23, 24.
[19] Matthew 24:35.
[20] John 8:29.
[21] Psalm 19:7.
[22] Luke 6:46.

self, *"But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."*[23]

Source of authority in the Roman Catholic Church

Within Roman Catholicism, the basis for truth is also absolute, but it is not the unqualified authority of God in His Written Word. Rather, it is the authority of a man, the Pope of Rome. The ultimate authority lies in the decisions and decrees of the reigning Pope. This is seen in documentation from official Roman Catholic sources. Canon 749 Sec.1 declares,

> "The Supreme Pontiff, in virtue of his office, possesses **infallible teaching authority** when, as supreme pastor and teacher of all the faithful...he proclaims with a definitive act that a doctrine of faith or morals is to be held as such."[24]

The mandated response of "the Christian faithful" to this claimed infallible teaching authority is spelled out in 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**…"

Any appeal or recourse against the totalitarian imposition of a claimed infallibility is silenced by the decree of Canon 333 Sec. 3, **"There is neither appeal nor recourse against a decision or decree of the Roman Pontiff."** According to the Bible, however, infallibility is an attribute of God and not that of any man or group of men. Like eternity and omniscience, infallibility is among God's incommunicable natural attributes, properties of His Being that cannot be passed or delegated to creatures. There are some things God declares He cannot do, He cannot lie, nor can he create another infallible one.[25] The Papal claim to "infallible teaching authority" is essentially a claim to divinity. Rome's doctrine exalts the Pope "*above all that is called God.*"[26] Scripture makes clear the fact that revealed truth is solely from God, *"For prophecy came not at any time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."*[27] Nothing more strikingly displays the arrogance of the Papacy than this appalling claim to infallibility. The Pope, in setting himself up as supreme, has *de facto* denied the absolute authority of God.

Skirting the problem by "situational infallibility"

Roman Catholic apologists generally object to ascribing divinity to the Papal office by virtue of this claim to infallibility. In fact, it is customary among them to point out that Rome's own statements confine the Pope's freedom from error only to those declarations concerning faith and morals that he, as the sole legitimate heir and successor of the Apostle Peter, pronounces. That is to say, a Roman Pope is considered to be infallible, not in his own person, but in his office as supreme pastor and head of the Church. This alleged chrism is granted to him standing at the head of the continuing Apostolic College of Cardinal bishops. The Pope's infallibility, it is alleged, is situational and not inherent in his person. This evasion, however, does not alleviate in any way the blasphemy bound up in the Papal claim. Apostolic succession inhering in Rome and the Papacy is simply a lie. Nowhere in Scripture is there any suggestion of the existence of an "apostolic succession". The Roman claim is completely inconsistent with the recorded commission that the Apostle Peter was to take the

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[23] Isaiah 66:2.

[24] Canon 749, *Code of Canon Law*, Latin-English Ed., New English Tr., 1999 (Washington DC: Canon Law Society of America, 1983). All canons are taken from this source unless otherwise stated. Bolding in any quotation indicates emphasis added in this paper.

[25] Isaiah 43:10, Titus 1:2.

[26] The Greek word for "above" can mean "in a place of" or "as much as". It seems to be this meaning that applies the text rather than superior to God, cf. Strong's *Hebrew-Greek Dictionary,* # 1909.

[27] II Peter 1:21.

Gospel to the Jews[28], as was the Apostle Paul to the Gentiles[29], including those in Rome. In the New Testament, the Apostles appointed elders and deacons, and not a line of apostles.[30] There remains also the fact that God cannot confer a "limited infallibility" any more than an unqualified infallibility. The contradiction still stands, even if the hair splitting seems convenient for Roman Catholic apologists. Infallibility is God's own nature. As an incommunicable attribute, it cannot be passed or delegated to any creature.

The ascription of even a "situational infallibility" to the Papal office is a wicked assumption. It attempts to elevate the Roman Catholic Church to the very throne of God, and to establish one man and his attending retinue of ecclesiastical sycophants and lackeys as self-appointed lords over the consciences of men. As the Scriptures themselves state, *"There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?"*[31]

That a human power should claim infallibility to be "as God" defies imagination, but Papal and collegiate infallibility are now so sufficiently nebulous as to provide a wealth of material for historical comedy. In aping God's attribute of infallibility, the system of Rome not only mocks the Godhead and His truth, it also denies the facts of history. Pope Honorious (625-638) was condemned as a heretic by the Sixth Ecumenical Council (680-681 A.D.). He was also condemned as a heretic by Pope Leo II, as well as by every other Pope until the eleventh century. So there were "infallible" Popes condemning another "infallible" Pope as heretics. The Roman Catholic historian Bernard Hasler writes "but [Pope] John XXII did not want to hear about his own infallibility; he viewed it an improper restriction of his rights as a sovereign, and in the bull *Qui quorundam* (1324) condemned the Franciscan doctrine of papal infallibility as the work of the devil."[32] Ignaz von Dollinger, another leading Roman Catholic historian in Germany, warned the world in his own day regarding the consequences of such a doctrine,

> "The Pope's authority is unlimited, incalculable; it can strike, as Innocent III says, wherever sin is; it can punish every one; it allows no appeal and is itself Sovereign Caprice; for the Pope carries, according to the expression of Boniface VIII, all rights in the Shrine of his breast. As he has now become infallible, he can by the use of the little word, "orbi," (which means that he turns himself round to the whole Church) make every rule, every doctrine, every demand, into a certain and incontestable article of Faith. No right can stand against him, no personal or corporate liberty; or as the [Roman Catholic] Canonists put it—'The tribunal of God and of the pope is one and the same.'"[33]

Rome's declaration of claimed infallibility is castigated by the Lord's commandment, *"I am the LORD thy God… thou shalt have no other gods before me."*[34] The basic blasphemy of Rome observed in this alleged infallibility is seen, although in different terminology, in her declaration that her tradition is divinely inspired.

The claim for Tradition, divinely inspired

To understand Rome's traditions**,** one must appreciate her sacrilegious mindset in the bold assertion that her doctrines are inspired by the Holy Spirit. Thus she says,

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[28] Galatians 2:7-8.
[29] Acts 13:46-48, 18:6; Romans:1:5, 11:13; Galatians1:16; I Timothy 2:7; II Timothy 1:11.
[30] The terms overseer and elder/pastor are used interchangeably (Acts 20:17, 28; I Peter 5:1-4).
[31] James 4:12, see also: Isaiah 33:22, Jeremiah 10:7, Matthew 10:28, Luke 12:5, Revelation 15:4.
[32] Bernard Hasler, *How the Pope Became Infallible* (USA: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1981) pp. 36, 37. Originally published in German under the title *Wie der Papst Unfehlbar Wurde* (Verlag, Munchen: R. Piper & Co., 1979).
[33] Ignaz von Dollinger, "A Letter Addressed to the Archbishop of Munich" 1871, as quoted in MacDougall, *The Acton Newman Relations* (Fordham University Press) pp. 119, 120.
[34] Exodus 20:2-3.

> "Following the divinely inspired teaching of our holy Fathers and the tradition of the Catholic Church (for we know that this tradition comes from the Holy Spirit who dwells in her)…"[35]

Thus Rome professes not to have the Bible, but rather to have the "Word" of God, incarnate and living. Thus she states,

> "Still, the Christian faith is not a 'religion of the book'. Christianity is the religion of the 'Word' of God, 'not a written and mute word, but incarnate and living.'"[36]

Only men devoid of the Holy Spirit could have penned and published such a misinformed opinion of Holy Scripture. The Bible, God's Written Word, shows the brightness of the Truth, Holiness, Majesty and Authority of God, given to it by its Author, the Holy Spirit. Sacred Scripture has the stamp God's excellence upon it, distinguishing it from all other writings. This is evidenced by the many fulfilled prophecies in the Bible, written hundreds of years before the actual event, pointing to Jesus Christ. Isaiah 7:14 speaks of "*a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son."* Isaiah 9:6 says, *"unto us a child is born… the Mighty God."* Micah 5:2 says, *"But thou Bethlehem…out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel."* Zechariah 9:9 says, *"behold thy King cometh unto thee; He is just and having salvation, lowly, and riding upon an ass."* In Luke 19:43-44, Jesus prophesied of the destruction to come to Jerusalem in 70 AD. By contrast, no Catholic document has any fulfilled prophecy in it because no Catholic document is inspired of God! Fulfilled prophecy is God's way of authenticating the Bible as the one inspired book.[37] God in these last days has spoken *"by his Son."*[38] Divine inspiration is revelation given in written words, it is not formed or preserved in a tidal swamp of human tradition, *"All scripture* [graphe] *is given by inspiration of God…."*[39] Rome's claim to "divinely inspired teaching of our holy Fathers and the tradition of the Catholic Church" is the ancient temptation and lie *"ye shall be as gods"*[40] again manifested. Rome would place herself on the throne of God declaring her tradition to be on a par with Scripture inspired by God. The Church of Rome does not stop there. In another document her assertions go so far as to contend that the very fullness of grace and truth belongs to the Catholic Church. From *Dominus Iesus*, Rome's exact words are, "Therefore, the fullness of Christ's salvific mystery belongs also to the Church, inseparably united to her Lord." And, "The Lord Jesus, the only Saviour, did not only establish a simple community of disciples, but constituted the Church as a salvific mystery: he himself is in the Church…" And, "the very fullness of grace and truth entrusted to the Catholic Church."[41]

The Bible speaks of only One to whom the very fullness of grace and truth has been entrusted, His name is the Lord Jesus Christ.[42] The Papal arrogance tallies well with what the Scripture predicted for such claims, *"he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."*[43] "*I will be like the most High."*[44] If Christ Himself were identified with "the very fullness of grace and truth" in the Church of Rome, He would have been responsible for all the torture and murder, heresy and intrigue of the Inquisition from the iniquitous Pope Innocent III in 1203 A.D., until its final dissolution in Spain and Portugal in 1808. The Christ of Scripture is separated from all such iniquity. He is the source and means of grace

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[35] *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1994) Para. 1161. *CCC* hereafter.
[36] *CCC,* Para. 108.
[37] Deuteronomy 18:22,Isaiah 41:21-29,Isaiah 42:9, Isaiah 43:9-12, Isaiah 45:21. Isaiah 48:14, John 13:19, John 16:14
[38] Hebrews 1:2.
[39] II Timothy 3:16.
[40] Genesis 3:5.
[41] "*Dominus Iesus*", September 5th 2000, Section 16.
[42] John 1:14.
[43] II Thessalonians 2:4.
[44] Isaiah 14:14.

and truth.[45] Far from being identified with her, He exposes her as *"the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs."*[46] He as the Lord of history reveals the rotten fruit that comes from her so-called "divinely inspired" tradition.

Where divinely inspired Tradition leads

Having examined the claim for a "tradition [that] comes from the Holy Spirit", an assessment to see just what that tradition is, follows. For example, Paragraph 1161 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states,

> "Following the divinely inspired teaching of our holy Fathers and the tradition of the Catholic Church (for we know that this tradition comes from the Holy Spirit who dwells in her) we rightly define with full certainty and correctness that, like the figure of the precious and life-giving cross, venerable and holy images of our Lord and God and Savior, Jesus Christ, our inviolate Lady, the holy Mother of God, and the venerated angels, all the saints and the just, whether painted or made of mosaic or another suitable material, are to be exhibited in the holy churches of God, on sacred vessels and vestments, walls and panels, in houses and on streets."

This is idolatry, plain, simple, and condemned by the Lord God.

The Bible makes clear that God hates idolatry and forbids a representation in art of what is divine (Exodus. 20:4-6). Making images to represent God corrupts those who use them (Deuteronomy 4:13, 15-16). Images teach lies about God (Habakkuk. 2:18-20). God cannot be represented in art and all who practice idolatry are commanded to repent (Acts 17:29-30). The Holy Spirit orders in the New Testament as He did the Old, *"Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen"* (1 John. 5:21). The traditions of Roman Catholicism bring into the worship of God unholy water mixed with oil and salt, the smells of charcoal and incense, the lives of frustrated celibate men and women, and worst of all, it brings in the idolatry which God hates. With such "images of our Lord and God", Rome commands the exhibition of "the venerated angels, all the saints" and saints' bones which are venerated as Holy Relics. Such teaching and behavior bring ridicule upon the Holy Spirit that she claims as the source of her tradition. The Church of Rome mocks God when they pretend that these traditions came from the Holy Spirit. As the promoter of lewdness in the institutions of her unholy traditions, there never was a more expressive or appropriate title of her than that penned by the Apostle John, *"And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."*[47]

Rome claims her Tradition is sacred

To maintain her pomp, ceremonies and sacraments, Rome officially states that her Tradition is sacred,

> "Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture, then, are bound closely together and communicate one with the other. For both of them, flowing out from the same divine wellspring, come together in some fashion to form one thing and move towards the same goal."[48]

Rome claims not only that Sacred Tradition forms "one thing" with God's Written Word but also that her Holy Tradition transmits God's Word. She declares,

> "*Sacred Scripture* is the speech of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit. And [Holy][49] *Tradition* transmits in its entirety the Word of God which has

[45] John 1:14, 17.
[46] Revelation 17:6.
[47] Revelation 17:5.
[48] *CCC,* Para. 80.
[49] Square brackets are in the original text.

been entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit. It transmits it to the successors of the apostles so that, enlightened by the Spirit of truth, they may faithfully preserve, expound, and spread it abroad by their preaching."[50]

Such teaching ascends from the pit of hell itself. It is a dishonor done to God's Holy Name and a profanity against His Holy Word. The Bible teaches that the Written Word of God cannot be commingled with Rome's Tradition; in the Lord Jesus Christ's own word, "*the Scripture cannot be broken."*[51] *"Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?"*[52] The Roman Catholic assertion that "Holy *Tradition* transmits in its entirety the Word of God" is literally a blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit communicates His Word to believers. This is His design and purpose in transmitting His Word to His people. It is not the Holy Spirit's endeavor to transmit an unholy tradition that upholds idolatry, superstition, and necromancy**.** *"So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."*[53] It is true faith that the Spirit of God seals in the hearts of believers, as He alone is the Spirit of truth. By His own divine light, efficacy, and power, the testimony of the Holy Spirit is given to all believers in the Written Word. The Holy Spirit's communication of His own light and authority to the Scripture is the evidence of its origin. The Holy Spirit brings His Word to believers.

Rome's declaration that "Holy *Tradition* transmits in its entirety the Word of God" not only denigrates the Divine Person of the Holy Spirit, it also focuses the mind on Tradition and not on the Divine Person of the Holy Spirit to open the Word to him or her. This is the very desire of Rome emphasized in italics in the beginning of Paragraph 113 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, *"Read the Scripture within the 'living Tradition of the whole Church.'"* Rome goes so far as to reprimand "the tendency to read and to interpret Sacred Scripture outside the Tradition and Magisterium of the Church."[54] Believers being convicted by the Holy Spirit receive, embrace, believe, and submit to the Scriptures because of the authority of God who gave them to us. The system of Rome maligns the Holy Spirit in claiming that "Holy *Tradition* transmits in its entirety the Word of God". This "Holy Tradition" can also be an unwritten tradition, which the Roman Catholic Church feels no compuction to write it down. This is actually the handy trick employed by dictators—the "law" is whatever the dictator says it is today. Since the law is not necessarily written down, it can be contradicted with impunity whenever the dictator feels like it. This is why written contracts are demanded in everyday life. "Tradition", used this way, is a very handy tool in the Roman Catholic arsenal. In so using it, she negates the very means by which a person is saved from his sin. Rome's teaching is literally soul damning, in the words of Lord, *"Woe unto you… for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered."*[55]

The Apostle Paul urges the believer to look to the *"demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."*[56] Just as a fresh supply of manna was given each day to the Israelites in the desert, so the Spirit of God ever breaks anew the Word of Life to those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. Therefore, it is incumbent on all Gospel preachers to faithfully direct the poor deluded prisoners of the Papacy away from the words of men, and toward the Scripture wherein they may

[50] *CCC*, Para. 81.
[51] John 10:35.
[52] Jeremiah 23:29.
[53] Isaiah 55:11.
[54] DOMINUS IESUS September 5th 2000 http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20000806_dominus-iesus_en.html
[55] Luke 11:52.
[56] I Corinthians 2:4, 5.

find One who said, *"He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."*[57]

The claim that apostolic succession upholds Tradition

Under the heading called *"The Apostolic Tradition"* and the sub heading "*...continued in apostolic succession*", Rome claims the following,

> "In order that the full and living Gospel might always be preserved in the Church the apostles left bishops as their successors. They gave them 'their own position of teaching authority.' Indeed, 'the apostolic preaching, which is expressed in a special way in the inspired books, was to be preserved in a continuous line of succession until the end of time.' This living transmission, accomplished in the Holy Spirit, is called Tradition, since it is distinct from Sacred Scripture, though closely connected to it."[58]

Nowhere in Scripture is there reference to the existence of the apostolic succession. In the New Testament the Apostles appointed not apostles but rather elders[59] and deacons. Nonetheless Rome attempts to defend her position in the name of personal succession from the Apostles.[60] If one wants to use the concept of "apostolic succession", the true successors of the Apostles are the saints of the household of God who *"are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone*."[61] If that doctrinal foundation is destroyed, instead of apostolic faith, one has apostasy. "Apostolic succession" without apostolic doctrine is a fraud. It is only Biblical doctrine that makes one wise unto salvation through faith that is in Christ Jesus.

If one actually investigates "succession" with Roman Catholicism, the evidence of a sequence from Pagan Rome is what appears as obvious. This is documented by one of their own famous scholars, John Henry Newman, as he wrote of the pagan origin of many Roman Catholic practices,

> We are told in various ways by Eusebius that Constantine, in order to recommend the new religion to the heathen, transferred into it the outward ornaments to which they had been accustomed in their own….The use of temples, and these dedicated to particular saints**,** and ornamented on occasions with branches of trees; incense, lamps**,** and candles; votive offerings on recovery from illness; holy water; asylums; holidays and seasons, use of calendars, processions, blessings on the fields; sacerdotal vestments, the tonsure…. images at a later date, perhaps the ecclesiastical chant, and the Kyrie Eleison, are all of pagan origin, and sanctified by their adoption into the Church.[62]

Such a succession of tradition in incense, candles, votive offerings, holy water, processions, blessed oils, palms, ashes and forbidding people to marry and the ordering of abstinence from certain foods, is, in the words of the Apostle *"a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof*."[63] The same Apostle spoke of the deterioration to follow; such in fact is the succession of Rome. *"For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock."*[64]

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[57] John 7:38.
[58] *CCC*, Para. 77, 78.
[59] The terms overseer and elder/pastor are used interchangeably (Acts 20:17, 28; I Peter 5:1-4).
[60] To the Pharisees of Jesus' time the Scripture did not mean a finished revelation. Their basic allegiance was to a "living Torah". Their real loyalty was to that living knowledge they claimed came through tradition from Moses. In precisely the same way, the system of Rome claims a "living transmission" called Tradition by means of apostolic succession.
[61] Ephesians 2:20.
[62] John Henry Cardinal Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1960) pp. 352-353.
[63] II Timothy 3:5.
[64] Acts 20:29.

It is the true Christ who speaks in Scriptures. In it He tells who He is, and what we are. He tells us that He has come to save us from our sins, and for that purpose the Father sent Him into the world. In order to bring that work to completion in individual men, the Holy Spirit takes the truth of Scripture and applies it to believers. He will lead His people out the religion of "baptized paganism" embodied in Rome. For all imaginative habits of tradition, her teachings, worship, and emotional pseudo-spiritual experiences that arise from outside the Bible, are no more than vagrant deceits and self-willed deceptions. "*Beware*" says the Scripture, "*lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ*."[65] It is beyond doubt that the Pope with all his robes and rituals from tradition cannot be the "Vicar of Christ" as he pretends. He is rather the Vicar of hell.

Tradition as an equal source of certainty

The Church of Rome is forthright in stating where her certainty regarding doctrine lies. She officially teaches,

> "As a result the [Roman Catholic] Church, to whom the transmission and interpretation of Revelation is entrusted, 'does not derive her certainty about all revealed truths from the holy Scriptures alone. Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honored with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence.'"[66]

This statement is a formal denial of the sufficiency of Scripture and a repudiation of its unique Authority, for Scripture alone is vested with all the moral authority of God over His creatures. For a Church claiming to be Christian to affirm her equal love for Tradition and the Scripture is to make the Scripture to be of no worth. It is like a husband who declares that he loves his wife, and he at the same time states that he also loves equally the woman across the street. Even as such love is adulterous, so also is Rome's "equal sentiments of devotion and reverence", for her Tradition translates as a rejection of Scripture and unfaithfulness to the God of Scripture.

Effectual superior position of Tradition

It is the very nature of authority to bear rule in itself. The life of faith must have a rule. It cannot finally bear any contradiction. If two alleged co-ordinate authorities stand in opposition on any point then, in the end, one will be taken as authority over the other. Rome's pretence of an equal "devotion and reverence" for both Scripture and Tradition is merely the ecclesiastical equivalent to the authority principle of a famous barnyard where it was paraded that, "all animals are equal", but subjoined with the qualifier, "some animals are more equal than others."[67] Tradition is always "committee chairman" with the deciding vote on matters of authority. That is how Rome lives out and continually enforces her rules. For example, in the "Profession of Faith" of the Council of Trent, the formula for submission is given with these words,

> The apostolic and ecclesiastical traditions and all other observances and constitutions of that same Church I most firmly admit and embrace. I likewise accept Holy Scripture according to that sense which our holy Mother Church has held and does hold, whose [office] it is to judge of the true meaning and interpretation of the sacred Scriptures; I shall never accept nor interpret it otherwise than in accordance with the unanimous consent of the Fathers.[68]

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[65] Colossians 2:8.
[66] *CCC*, Para. 82.
[67] Orwell, George, *Animal Farm* (Heineman, 1979) p. 85.
[68] Denzinger, Henry, *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, Tr. By Roy J. Deferrari, 30th Ed. of *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, Rev. by Karl Rahner, S. J. (St Louis, MO: B. Herder Book Co., 1957) # 995.

The seat of authority, or the rule of faith, is firmly in the hands of the Roman hierarchy. The men who make up the hierarchy are 'holy Mother Church.' They sit in judgment on the Scriptures. The end result is that the Catholic person ends up believing not the Almighty God and His Word, but rather holy Mother Church and her tradition. This way of thinking is drilled into the minds of those the Roman hierarchy degradingly calls, 'the faithful'. An example of how the rule of faith is imposed is found in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*,

> "'Believing' is an ecclesial act. The Church's faith precedes, engenders, supports and nourishes our faith. The Church is the mother of all believers. 'No one can have God as Father who does not have the Church as Mother'"[69]
>
> "Because she is our mother, she is also our teacher in the faith."[70]
>
> "As a mother who teaches her children to speak and so to understand and communicate, the Church our Mother teaches us the language of faith in order to introduce us to the understanding and the life of faith."[71]

The final position of the Catholic faithful is that they are compelled to submit to holy Mother Church and accept her rule of faith. That rule of faith is easily exposed as "whatever Mother says is true, is true", and, if the question is ever raised as to why this is so, the only reply is that it must be true because Mother says it. In *Animal Farm,* it was Napoleon who turned out to be the final authority in all matters of policy, including life and death for the other creatures. So in Roman Catholicism, its whirligig of "equal sentiments of devotion and reverence" ends up with the "Holy Father" telling the Catholic what to do based on "Holy Mother's" manufactured Tradition. The Scripture cuts directly through all this, "*call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven."*[72] The word "father" denotes an authority, a right to command, and a claim to innate filial respect. The Scripture teaches that this title belongs eminently only to God, and is not to be tendered to mere men. Genuine Christian brethren are equal before the Lord and are commanded to practice authentic spiritual submission one to another.[73] Only God has supreme authority. Just as it is utterly immoral to call the Pope, "Holy Father", so it is sinful and deceiving to call him and his hierarchy "Holy Mother".

Rome's pride in having people believe in her as "Holy Mother Church" is as basic as the blazing eruption of vanity in the heart of Eve, leading her to accede to the wicked insinuations, "*Yea, hath God said?*" and "*Ye shall be as gods*."[74] For this reason, the Scripture says: *"the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness*."[75] In equating Tradition to Scripture, the Roman Catholic Church has thereby stifled the truth in unrighteousness. The very element in which and by which the truth is known and enjoyed has thus become darkness. The Lord's own teaching that one's spiritual understanding must be single, as opposite of twofold, is of uttermost importance in this regard. He the Lord declared, *"The light of the body is the eye: if, therefore, thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If, therefore, the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness."*[76] To have a twofold authority base for understanding all revealed truths in place of the exclusive authority of God in His Written Word is to walk in darkness, suppressing the truth in unrighteousness. Christ Jesus the Lord showed His wrath against the Pharisees for the same offence because it undermines the very the authority and

[69] *CCC*, Para. 181.
[70] *CCC*, Para. 169.
[71] *CCC*, Para. 171.
[72] Matthew 23:9.
[73] Ephesians 5:21; II Corinthians 1:24, 4:5.
[74] Genesis 3:1.
[75] Romans 1:18.
[76] Matthew 6:22, 23.

Person of God. He called them *"Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers,"*[77] as their sin was like unto that of Satan who denied the all sufficiency of the Lord's Written Word. The severity of the Lord's condemnation ought not to be a surprise because the system of the Pharisees was the base enemy of sound doctrine and the corrupter of the Scripture. Christ intended to strike dread into His people, so that that they might guard against a similar deception. To deal with this debasement in any way but with the utmost seriousness would be to fail the Lord Jesus Christ and betray the souls of men. Making tradition a part of the rule of faith subverts the entire authority of Scripture, and is a formal refusal of the Lordship of Christ.[78]

How Roman authority impacts Catholics

The Roman Catholic Church states how she is communicated and perpetuated to every generation. Her official words are, "Through Tradition, 'the [Roman Catholic] Church, in her doctrine, life, and worship perpetuates and transmits to every generation all that she herself is, all that she believes.'"[79] It is absolutely tragic that this testimony is quite true. Rome's doctrine, life, and worship, all that she herself is, and all that she believes, is perpetuated and transmitted to every generation. The fruits of this are seen in the pages of history and the crisis of faith worldwide concerning the truth for Catholics today. As in the past, Catholics who have Tradition instructing them are easily shaken in their hearts. Utterly lacking the assurance of faith in Christ that belongs to the believer, its living witness in the heart brought by the indwelling Holy Spirit and the confirmation of the Written Word, the Roman Catholic must do battle with the all the motions of original sin and doubt that pervade the heart and assail the mind. Quite logically, major doctrines concerning judgment, the inspiration of Scripture, the afterlife, the Person of Christ, and place of the moral law all become relative to one's feelings and circumstances. Eventually a substantial percentage of professing Catholics become cynical and derogatory of Rome's faith and practice.

The contemporary crisis of faith is documented by many Roman Catholic periodicals. For example, in nothing but large print the cover of *The Catholic World Report* of February 1999 proclaimed, "THERE IS A CRISIS IN FAITH…A CRISIS CONCERNING THE ABILITY TO KNOW THE TRUTH. THE CRISIS OF FAITH IS WORLD-WIDE." The subtitle was, "BLUNT TALK FROM THE VATICAN". The special report inside goes on for thirteen pages. Some conclusions are given on the crisis in faith in Australia that are typical of the worldwide problem,

> The *Statement of Conclusions* offered a number of general observations about the 'crisis in faith' in Australia, which was understood to reflect the growing influence of secularism and a consequent declining belief in God, in the afterlife, and in the inspiration of the Scriptures. This crisis, the document states, has reduced a perception of Christ in many cases to just 'a great prophet of humanity' and the Church to a body of purely human origin. Truth, in the eyes of many Australians, is now seen to be based on "the shifting sands of majority and consensus." At the same time, individual conscience had been elevated to an absolute, and heterosexuality and homosexuality viewed as 'two morally equivalent variations.' This kind of thinking had found its way into the Church. Such a situation was confirmed by recent Australian research which showed that between 1991 and 1996, among religious categories in the census statistics, 'no religion' was the fastest growing, rising by 35 percent, whereas the general population had increased by only 5.4 percent over the same period. Of those raised

[77] Matthew 23:33.
[78] Luke 19:14.
[79] *CCC*, Para 78.

> as Catholics, over 20 percent would enter the 'no religion' category in adulthood.[80]

If only today's Bible believers could see as clearly as Catholics the evil fruit of Roman authority perpetuating itself to every generation! The Lord's own cry when faced with sterile tradition and it fruits was, *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"*[81] The very heart of the Lord Christ Jesus pours itself forth through human flesh and words, then and now. It is the incarnation of profound love pleading with men to bring them back to His finished and sufficient Word of truth in the Scriptures, and to His only efficacious sacrifice, *"and when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it"*[82]

Church behavior to be as a pillar and ground of truth

Rome has the uncommon audacity to advance the claim that the Church mentioned in I Timothy 3:15 is herself, the Catholic Church, governed by the Pope. The following bold assertion is directed as a requirement binding on those she calls her faithful,

> The Catholic faithful are required to profess that there is an historical continuity—rooted in the apostolic succession between the Church founded by Christ and the Catholic Church: 'This is the single Church of Christ...which our Saviour, after his resurrection, entrusted to Peter's pastoral care (cf. Jn 21:17), commissioning him and the other Apostles to extend and rule her (cf. Mt 28:18ff.), erected for all ages as 'the pillar and mainstay of the truth' (1 Tim 3:15). This Church, constituted and organized as a society in the present world, subsists in [subsistit in] the Catholic Church, governed by the Successor of Peter and by the Bishops in communion with him'.[83]

Any time Rome argues for her legitimacy, a careful watch must be made for any thought or line of reasoning that actually undercuts the authority of the Word of God. Rome is always seeking to introduce extra-biblical sources to undermine biblical authority, and to place herself above the Bible. In the above quote, it is "historical continuity" that accomplishes diminishment of biblical authority. "Dominus Iesus"' here actually exposes the Roman Catholic Church's deceptive reasoning, for it is stated unequivocally that she is first requiring the "faithful" to put their trust in "historical continuity" or to put it more plainly, what fallible history books say! So a Catholic is to put his trust in fallible history books, which root him in an apostolic succession she does not have because she does not have apostolic doctrine. Rome here demonstrates again her dependence on "historical continuity", or tradition, rather than the written word of the Lord. Therefore she proves that she is not "the pillar and mainstay of truth."

Further, there is no continuity in faith and practice between the early Church and the state institutional system(i.e., the Roman Catholic Church) that latterly emerged under the sponsorship of Imperial Rome. The Roman "Church" must be by her very nature utterly excluded from the above Bible text because what is said refers to a Church that is upholding the truth. Given her superstitions and empty blasphemous rituals, this would make the Church of Rome the last imaginable reference for the Apostle Paul who, to the contrary, was prophetically granted an insight into the rise of the seminal errors of that mystery of iniquity that would eventually appear as the Papacy.[84]

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[80] *The Catholic World Report* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press) February 1999, p. 49.
[81] Matthew 23:37.
[82] Luke 19:41.
[83] Declaration "Dominus Iesus", Section 16.
[84] II Thessalonians 2:7, I Timothy 4:1-3

The text itself states, *"But if I [Paul] tarry long, that thou[Timothy] mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."*[85] The focus of the verse is on the behavior of the believer upholding truth. As with the wise man of Luke chapter six, he is founded on rock when he hears the Word and does what it says; so in this passage, Paul is telling Timothy how he ought to behave in the local church at Ephesus. He is to conduct himself in the house of God in such a way that the Church of the living God upholds truth and is in fact, grounded upon it. In the context this is the meaning of the verse. The verse cannot be understood to make the Church, independent of its being rooted in truth, to be the pillar and ground of truth. No other Scripture text says this and in fact, the opposite is stated. The Church that is not rooted in truth is again and again seen failing in conduct, as Paul's letters to the Corinthians and Galatians make clear, and also the book of Revelation, chapters one to three. The Church in its members is born out of the Word of truth in the Scriptures. As the Holy Spirit so clearly tells us, *"Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth.*" [86] and that believers are *"born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."*[87] The Lord's Word gave life to the early Church as it does today. The true Church is "the pillar of the truth" as the historical continuance of the truth on which it rests. It witnesses to and preserves the Word of truth. He who is of the truth belongs by that very fact to the Church, for He belongs to Christ, its Head. The Lord Christ Jesus alone is the ground of the truth in the highest sense. *"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."*[88] The Church rests on the truth as it is in Christ, and in His Written Word.

The Apostle Paul is not claiming that any church is truth, or can be "the truth". He shows in many places the failings of particular churches in doctrine in many cities to which he writes. He is urging the behavior of the Church to be as a placard or billboard upon which the very Word of God is proclaimed in such a way to be the pillar and ground of truth. The Apostle was concerned about the behavior of Timothy and the local believers at Ephesus. He was not denying what he had declared so consistently in his letters, nor the principle outlined by Christ Jesus and through the whole of Scripture, that God's Word is truth. When a church is "erected for all ages as 'the pillar and mainstay of the truth,'" as is Rome's spurious claim, horrendous results become manifest, as for example, the Church of Rome declaring that the sacraments are necessary for salvation; that Mary is the All Holy One, and all manner of errors, heresies, and blasphemies. If the true Church is "the pillar and ground of truth", it is certain that this is not the Roman Catholic Church, where an avalanche of extra-biblical traditions have completely buried the glorious Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ under the accumulation of human works. The true Church was not instituted to be a chain to bind the body of Christ in idolatry, impiety, ignorance of God, and other kinds of evil. Rather, as the Apostle teaches, it was in correct behavior to train the believers in the fear of God and obedience of the truth—all of which is sufficiently taught already in the Word of God. The same Apostle declares that the Church is not founded either upon the judgments of men or a priesthood, but rather upon the doctrine of the Apostles and Prophets (Ephesians 2:20). The Bride of Christ washed clean in the blood of the Lamb is to be distinguished from the Mother of Harlots drunken with the blood of the saints. The Church of the Lord Jesus Christ is to be separated from the conspiracy of Satan by the discriminating test which our Savior has applied to all believers, *"He that is of God, heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye*

[85] I Timothy 3:15
[86] James 1:18
[87] I Peter 1:23
[88] I Corinthians 3:11

are not of God."[89] On this vital test Rome, utterly fails. The very fact that the Roman Catholic Church will not accept the Written Word of God as ultimate authority seals the fact that she is not of God.

"Thy word is truth"

The same Holy Spirit Who has given His Word in the Scriptures uses it most fruitfully to convict of sin and to bring eternal life. All growth in the fellowship of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is also the fruit of God's truth in His Holy Word. The Church of Rome's skill and hypocrisy in placing Tradition on par with Scripture, as inspired, and equally to be accepted with certainty, is the same sin of the Scribes and Pharisees. The difference is that the Roman Catholic Church far surpasses the Scribes and Pharisees in craft and deceitfulness of expression in upholding their traditions. Christ Jesus' reproof is more profoundly true of Rome than when first applied to the Scribes and Pharisees. *"But woe unto you… hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in."*[90] The Church of Rome, having the same love and confidence in traditions as in the pure truth of God's Written Word, is "*as a wife that committeth adultery, which taketh strangers instead of her husband!"*[91] Such harlotry begets false worship, idolatry, and pride. In Catholicism, people worship the communion bread as God, which is not God,[92] they give their hearts to idols, with a saint for every season and every ill. Doctrines, rites, and administrations take the place of what God has revealed and appointed in His Word. The reason is obvious. Rome has taken the Holy God's truth and commingled it with the traditions of men, with such results as the dishonoring of marriage and the supporting of ungodly celibacy in monasteries and convents.

The source of all life and truth is God Himself. He has graciously communicated that life and truth by the work of the Holy Spirit in giving His own sure word of prophecy in His Holy Word.[93] He has not granted or ceded any authority to add, change, or adapt His Word to a supposed infallible "Holy Father" in Rome. Spiritual Fatherhood belongs eminently and only to God. Only God has supreme authority. He only has a right to give laws, to declare doctrines that shall bind the conscience, and to punish disobedience. God's Written Word alone has absolute authority. Nevertheless, Rome's grasping for power and authority with hands covered in traditions, leads not simply into false teachings, but also to assuming the divine right to impose her laws with force. Thus the present Pope and his system proclaim, "The Church has the innate and proper right to coerce offending members of the Christian faithful by means of penal sanctions."[94] The Lord Christ Jesus said, *"The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them…But ye shall not be so."*[95] One thousand seven hundred fifty-two is the number of Roman Catholic laws. The weight of guilt and torment under some one hundred sixty-four Pharisaic laws was light compared to the oppression exercised by the Pope, Cardinals, Patriarchs, Archbishops, Bishops, Episcopal Vicars, Vicars apostolic, Apostolic administrators, Vicar generals, and ordinary Priests**. "***For they bind heavy burdens and*

[89] John 8:47

[90] Matthew 23:13.

[91] Ezekiel 16:32.

[92] "There should be no doubt in anyone's mind 'that all the faithful ought to show to this most holy sacrament the worship which is due to the true God, as has always been the custom of the Catholic Church. Nor is it to be adored any the less because it was instituted by Christ to be eaten." *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents,* No. 9, *Eucharisticum Mysterium,* Austin Flannery, ed. (Northport, NY: Costello Publ. Co., 1975) 1981 ed., Vol. I, Sec. 3, p. 104. All Vatican Council II documents are taken from this source unless otherwise stated.

[93] II Peter 1:19.

[94] *Code of Canon Law,* Latin-English edition (Washington, DC: Canon Law Society of America, 1989) Can. 1311.

[95] Luke 22:25, 26.

grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers."

Rome's metaphysical, and psychological Aristotelian-Thomistic traditions have become the standard diet of millions. Greek and pagan mysticism have reappeared in Catholicism in ecstasies, apparitions, blessed bones, holy water, unity consciousness, and a hierarchy of virgins and saints. *"If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?"*[96] What safety or confidence does anyone have if the very foundation of the truth of God's Word is confused with the smells, yells, and bells of traditions? By supplanting the Scripture with her tradition, and supplanting the Biblical means of grace by her sacrificial priesthood, the Roman Catholic Church moves once again to gather to herself all power and all authority over the souls of men. In Scripture all power in heaven and earth is given to Christ Jesus the Lord alone, and on earth His absolute authority undergirds His Written Word of truth alone. True believers must stand where He stands, for His Word is truth. The written Word of God is like the sun. In its light all things are seen as they really are; without it, nothing is seen for what it really is. The Church of Rome does not simply place a cloud over the light of the Word by imposing her ceremonies and traditions; rather she makes void the very brightness of the revelation of God in His Written Word. She cannot concede on this vital foundational issue of ultimate authority, for if Rome agreed to forfeit her pomp and ceremony, she would cease to attract the world of the mind and flesh. Because of her incorrigible, unbending attitude, she decrees that the definitions of all Roman Pontiffs are "irreformable by their very nature."[97] The final and absolute authority for the true believer, however, is the Written Word of God alone, "*Thy Word is truth."*[98] As the Lord Himself denounced both the Pharisees and their traditions, so must the true believer *"earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."*[99] Like King David, the true believer praises the Lord for His loving kindness and for His truth "*for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name."*[100] The Church of Rome, however, has *"changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen."*[101]

The Bible given to the early Church

The Church of Rome teaches that the Bible was given to her. Thus she states,

> "For Holy Mother Church, relying on the faith of the apostolic age, accepts as sacred and canonical the books of the Old and the New Testaments, whole and entire, with all their parts, on the grounds that, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they have God as their author, and have been handed on as such to the Church herself."[102]
>
> "It was by the apostolic Tradition that the Church discerned which writings are to be included in the list of the sacred books."[103]

The leaders of the early Church received the Old Testament as did the Jews, and they received the books of the New Testament recognizing the inherent authority of those writings was given by the Holy Spirit from God. The New Testament was received as the Word of God as the common property of believers and heritage of the people of God. This was in the manner and humility of faith as expressed by the Apostle Paul, *"For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye re-*

[96] Psalm 11:3.
[97] Flannery, Vatican Council II Documents, No. 28, *Lumen Gentium,*21 Nov. 1964, Vol. I., p. 380.
[98] John 17:17.
[99] Jude 3.
[100] Psalm 138:2
[101] Romans 1:25
[102] CCC, Para 105
[103] CCC, Para 120

ceived it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."[104] This was in the centuries before the over-powering dictatorial supremacy of the Church of Rome was established. These Christians did not look on the Church as "Holy Mother"; rather for the most part, their attitude as believers was as that expressed by the Lord, *"for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren."*[105] Unlike present day Roman Catholicism, the early Church understood Apostolic Tradition as Apostolic doctrine, in line with the written Word of the Apostles, and not as a source distinct from Scripture. "From the very beginning of the post apostolic age with the writings of what are known as the Apostolic Fathers (Ignatius, Polycarp, Clement, the Didache, and Barnabus) there is an exclusive appeal to the Scriptures for the positive teaching of doctrine and for its defense against heresy. The writings of the Apostolic Fathers literally breathe with the spirit of the Old and New Testaments. In the writings of the apologists such as Justin Martyr and Athenagoras the same thing is found. There is no appeal in any of these writings to the authority of a verbal or extra-biblical Tradition as a separate and independent body of revelation. It is with the writings of Irenaeus and Tertullian in the mid to late second century that the concept of Apostolic Tradition that is handed down in the Church in oral form is first encountered. The word "tradition" simply means teaching. Irenaeus and Tertullian state emphatically that all the teachings of the Bishops that was given orally was rooted in Scripture and could be proven from the written Scriptures. Both men give the actual doctrinal content of the apostolic Tradition that was orally preached in the churches, and it can be seen clearly that all their doctrine was derived from Scripture. There was no doctrine in what they refer to as apostolic Tradition that is not found in Scripture. In other words, the apostolic Tradition defined by Irenaeus and Tertullian is simply the teaching of Scripture. It was Irenaeus who stated that while the Apostles at first preached orally, their teaching was later committed to writing (the Scriptures), and the Scriptures had since that day become the pillar and ground of the Church's faith."[106]

As has been seen at the beginning of this article, from the earliest times a substantial part of the New Testament was available to the believers. The four Gospels were known and read in the Churches. The letters of Apostles Paul and Peter were circulated, and used even while the Apostles lived. These New Testament books did not become authoritative because they were being formally accepted as Scripture by any church or group of churches, rather because the believers received them as inspired, recognizing in their Apostolic authority the very Word of God. The life of Christ Jesus, in His role as the final and full revelation of God[107] culminated in the New Testament Canon. It expressed the final prophetic word of grace and truth given in Him. The early believers accepted the Written Word of the New Testament, as like unto Christ Jesus Himself, unchangeable, final, finished and authoritative. In this they were totally unlike Romanism, with its unholy Tradition equally honoured and revered as Scripture, and its cleverly evolving doctrine, such as its recent acceptance of Islam.[108]

God's people in the first three centuries after Christ universally accepted what we now know as the New Testament. The spirit and humility in which they *"received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God."* There were indeed controversies over individual books, all of which confirmed rather than impeded the certainty that they had God's final Written Word "*which was once delivered unto the saints."* The Lord's people universally knew the contents of the canon of the New Testament well before the local Coun-

[104] I Thessalonians 2:13
[105] Matthew 23:8
[106] William Webster, *Sola Scriptura and the Early Church,* pp 1,2 www.bereanbeacon.org
[107] Hebrews 1:1-2.
[108] See our paper, *The Papacy and Islam.* www.bereanbeacon.org, www.users.bigpond.com/farel/index.html

cil of Hippo formally accepted it in 393, and the provincial Council of Carthage in 397. The teachings of Rome contradict the New Testament in her hierarchical pyramid of authority beginning in the Pope, her Mary, seven Sacraments, Purgatory and other unholy traditions. In the Rome's acceptance of the Apocryphal books in the Old Testament, she also contradicts the teachings of the early Church. It is patently obvious, therefore, that the Roman Catholic Church's identifying herself with the early Church and claiming that Bible has been handed over to her by God, is both false and historically absurd. In her more than 600 years of Inquisition against those who received, treasured, and lived by the Scriptures, she has show herself not as "Holy Mother Church" but rather as the Word of truth paints her, "*the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus."*[109]

The fountain of life poisoned by the Apocrypha

Two historical contradictions occur in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church.* First, the Canon of accepted books is not the one recognized by the Apostles or the primitive church. Rome's official declaration is as follows,

> It was by the apostolic Tradition that the Church discerned which writings are to be included in the list of the sacred books. This complete list is called the canon of Scripture. It includes 46 books for the Old Testament (45 if we count Jeremiah and Lamentations as one) and 27 for the New.
>
> The Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah, Tobit, Judith, Esther, 1 and 2 Maccabees, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Songs, the Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Baruch, Ezekiel, Daniel, [inserted additions to Daniel, Bel and the Dragon and the Song of the three Holy Children] Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zachariah and Malachi.
>
> The New Testament: the Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, the Acts of the Apostles, the Letters of St. Paul to the Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, the Letter to the Hebrews, the Letters of James, 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2 and 3 John, and Jude, and Revelation (the Apocalypse). [110]

Please note the many extra-biblical writings. The Catholic Church herself refers to these books as the "deuterocanonical books", a term meaning second canon. They are Tobit, Judith, I and II Maccabees, the Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), Baruch, and inserted into the book of Daniel in the third chapter; "The Song of the three young men", plus the additional chapter 13 of Daniel with the story "Susanna" and chapter 14 with the account of "Bel and the Dragon". Hence from this "complete list" is plain evidence that Holy Mother Church does not rely on "the apostolic Tradition" and never intended to do so. If she had purposed to follow apostolic Tradition, she would not have broken the biblical prohibition of adding to the Word of God. This accretion was a historical deception formalized at the Council of Trent in 1546 with the express purpose of destroying the internal consistency of self-interpretation in Holy Scripture. By including these Apocryphal writings in their canon of Scripture, the Roman Catholic hierarchy was able to effectively undermine individual confidence in the work of the Holy Spirit in illuminating the Word to the seeking soul. The presence of human error, subsumed and bound by ecclesiastical cunning and craft into the Written Word of God, attempts to makes the Word of God of none effect. These books and other additions, while interesting in giving the believer insights into the period of history between Malachi and the Gospel of Matthew, yet because of magical divination in "Tobit" and "Bel

[109] Revelation17:6
[110] *CCC*, Para 120

and the Dragon", and the sheer foolishness at times in the "Wisdom of Solomon", prove to be spiritual land mines planted in the Word of God. A person's faith in the inerrant and All Wise God can be shattered as one wonders how inspired is the history of the Maccabees, since I Maccabees clearly teaches that there were no prophets of the Lord in the land in those days!

This intrusion of the Apocrypha into the inspired and inerrant Word of God is of utmost importance. The additions amount to nigh one quarter of the size of the Old Testament in what is called a Roman Catholic Bible. The entire Word of God is thereby polluted. The Lord's gift to the believer is like unto the Lord Himself, a Word in which there is neither uncertainty nor shadow of deceit.[111] *"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."*[112] Quite a contrast is the false "Bible" of the Roman Catholic Church. It is one of irregularity, fickleness, and vacillation in a large portion of what is wrongly called the Word of the Living God. The same Pope who kisses this unholy Bible has also publicly kissed the Qu'ran of Mohammed. It looks indeed that such kisses are the same as those of the woman of Proverbs Seven who invitingly declared, "*I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry, with carved works, with fine linen of Egypt*."[113]

Once the errant apocryphal additions are removed from the Roman Catholic Bible, it becomes a witness to the truth of the Lord God. But until that day, it stands as a morbid witness against Rome and her presumptions. Rome's own polluted "Bible" is the clear evidence that there is no similarity historically or doctrinally between the Apostolic Church and the one who dares to call herself "Holy Mother".

Reasons why the Apocrypha cannot be accepted

The four main reasons why the Apocrypha cannot be accepted as part of the Bible are:

1. The Lord Jesus Christ and the writers of the New Testament did not accept the Apocryphal books as God's Word. It is extremely significant that although there are numerous quotations and references to almost all of the canonical books of the Old Testament in the New Testament, the Lord and the writers of the New Testament never once quoted from the Apocrypha.
2. The Old Testament was given by God to the Jewish people, in the words of the Apostle, "*unto them were committed the oracles of God."*[114] The Jews have never accepted anything more than the canonical books of the Old Testament. For example, the Jewish scholars of Jamnia in A.D. 90 recognized the books of the Old Testament, as did the Early Church and Christians of today. They did not recognize the Apocrypha. The Jewish historian, Josephus (A.D. 30-100), explicitly excludes the Apocrypha.
3. There is a conspicuous absence of a claim to be inspired in the books of the Apocrypha themselves; rather, in fact some of the books themselves state that the Lord was not speaking through His prophets at that time, e.g. I Maccabees 9:27, I Maccabees 14:41.
4. The Apocrypha contains errors, fables, superstitions, magic, deceit, and wrong doctrine such as praying for the dead. All of these things are totally at variance to the pure word of God in the canonical books. For example, in Wisdom 8:19 Solomon is made to say, "Now I was a well favored child and I came by a noble nature." But this is at variance with Romans 3:23, *"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."* Another example is II Maccabees 12:45. This verse is quoted in the *Catechism of the Catholic*

[111] Proverbs 22:21
[112] James 1:17
[113] Proverbs 7:16
[114] Romans 3:2

Church to justify communion with the dead and prayer for the dead bound by their sins. The official teaching based on the lie of II Maccabees 12:45 is the following,

> "*Communion with the dead.* 'In full consciousness of this communion of the whole Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, the Church in its pilgrim members, from the very earliest days of the Christian religion, has honored with great respect the memory of the dead; and 'because it is a holy and a wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from their sins' [II Mac. 12:45] she offers her suffrages for them.' Our prayer for them is capable not only of helping them, but also of making their intercession for us effective."[115]

This pagan practice of communion with the dead is forbidden in the Bible, for example, *"There shall not be found among you any one...that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer, [one who calls up the dead]."*[116]

Then the false humanistic assumption, that man is left to his own resources when it comes to salvation, is taught in Ecclesiasticus 15:14 in the Roman Catholic "Bible". This deadly error is quoted in the present day Vatican II documents of Rome,

> "It is, however, only in freedom that man can turn himself towards what is good. . . . For God willed that man should 'be left in the hand of his own counsel' [Ecclesiasticus 15:14] so that he might of his own accord seek his creator and freely attain his full and blessed perfection by cleaving to him."[117]

This type of soul damning teaching shows why the Roman Catholic Church included the Apocrypha, and how unashamedly she uses it to propogate lies. Other blatant examples of ghastly errors are found in Tobit 12:9, Judith 10:11-13, and Baruch 3:4.

As an unusual exception to the general rejection of the Apocrypha by the Early Church, Augustine and two local councils in North Africa in the late fourth century and early fifth century argued for the acceptance the Apocrypha. Using this exception (it was not even in itself perfectly clear just how much Augustine approved of the Apocrypha), the Council of Trent in 1546 accepted and endorsed the Apocrypha as part of God's Holy Word. The reader should note, however, that the Roman Catholic Church itself did not accept and formally sanction the lying treachery of these additions to the Written Word of God until 1546, and only then with the express purpose of nullifying the potent biblically-based critiques directed against her by the Protestant Reformers.

Conclusion

The frank examination of the Roman Catholic Church's doctrine of authority made here leads to the conclusion that her authority is not simply without true biblical foundation, but it also is an attempt to completely usurp the Divine authority of the Lord God in His Written Word. "Holy Mother Church", in biblical terms is neither holy nor strictly speaking a Church. She is rather clearly the successor to the Imperial Roman Empire embodied in her arrogance in law, traditions and pagan customs. The Barbarian overthrow of the Roman Empire was succeeded by the gradual rise of papal Rome. A very significant event in this evolution took place in the sixth century. The Emperor Justinian, who was living in the East in Constantinople, handed over his title of Supreme High Priest (Summum Pontifex) to Vigilius, Bishop of Rome. This he did in the sixth century. The exact date given by some is 538 AD.[118] The bestowal by Justinian of the title of the Supreme Pontiff, which entailed the universal oversight

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[115] *CCC*, Para. 958

[116] Deuteronomy 18:10-11

[117] Flannery, Vatican Council II Documents, No. 64, *Gaudium et spes*, 7 December 1965, Vol 1, Sec. 17, p.917.

[118] LeRoy Edwin Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1978) Vol. I, p. 513.

of the entire Christian World, exalted the Bishop of Rome to become what we know as the Pope. He was, as Supreme Pontiff, to become spiritual head of the restored Roman Empire. In 800 AD, the work of Charlemagne completed the evolution of that movement by the creation of the "Holy Roman Empire" of medieval and modern times.[119] It is in this office as the Supreme Pontiff that the Pope claims the divine attribute of infallibility,

> "The Supreme Pontiff, in virtue of his office, possesses infallible teaching authority."[120]
>
> "Furthermore we declare, say, define, and proclaim to every human creature that they, by necessity for salvation, are entirely subject to the Roman Pontiff " [121]

The biblical-prophetic identity of Rome is not in any doubt to those given eyes to see. The specter haunting "Holy Mother Church" (including some of her devout apologists) is that she is in fact the *"Mother of Harlots and abominations of the earth,"*[122] *"that was, and is not, and yet is."*[123] That is, the city of Rome was a seat of arrogance, idolatry and persecution in a purely pagan form under the civil Emperors, who also simultaneously held the pagan religious title of Supreme Pontiff. The base of the city of Rome's power at that time was its military might. That form, based in Imperial Rome's military might, is no longer in existence. Yet in a certain sense it really does still exist because the same city, now under the religious and spiritual power of Roman Catholic Supreme Pontiffs, is still a civil state, still claims supreme power, and still practices idolatry even in some of the same buildings. The old civil-religious form or title of Supreme Pontiff, handed down from Imperial Rome through the Holy Roman Empire, today stands primarily on a spiritual power base, but one which claiming to be Christian while her final authority is herself rather than the written Word of God. They that dwell on the earth wonder at her, the weird "Holy Mother Church" that acts as if she were supreme over God and the Holy Bible.

Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit

In attributing her Tradition to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and His leading to such preposterous claims as Papal infallibility, is in the strict sense of the term a blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. That is why there can never be any negotiation, compromise, or alliance between the Vatican and Bride of Christ. The "Temple curia" of the Pharisees, in the Lord's time identified themselves with all that was good, upright, and holy. There was no question in their minds but that God worked wholly in, by, and through their teachings and administrations. Christ Jesus, however, showed them to be *"like unto whited sepulchers, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness."*[124] In a similar manner, the proud privileges and claims of the Roman System to be the very mouthpiece of God are shown by the Word of the Lord to be rather "*seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.*"[125] Even the testimony of history shows that this system has been an instrument of persecution of true biblical faith and a tool of assimilation whereby pagan shrines and artifacts have become grottos of Mary and images of her person. The Roman religion and her form of godliness has become a cloak to cover her paganism. Her basis of all of this is the plea that her Tradition is to be equally honored as the Lord's own Written Word. To the destruction of "the faithful", therefore, her traditions include *"Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth."*[126] Her false basis in Tradition has allowed her to construct a Worldwide Empire where she enforces her will over 814,779 women who are her

[119] See Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Chapter 15.
[120] Canon 749.
[121] Denzinger, Henry, *Unam Sanctum*, Nov. 18, 1302, #469.
[122] Revelation 17:4
[123] Revelation 17:8
[124] Matthew 23:27
[125] I Timothy 4:1

nuns, 57,813 men whom she calls religious brothers, and 404,626 men whom she calls her priests. [127]

The Holy Spirit, foreseeing all these things, as the Guide and Comforter of the true Church, has graciously provided a divine answer for the dangerous, ubiquitous, and deceiving System of Rome and her fabricated Authority base. God Himself Who began the writing of the Word with His own finger, has in these last days spoken to us *"by His Son."*[128] This Son has authenticated the Old Testaments writings and as the Alpha and Omega, having all Authority in heaven and on earth, He commanded the finishing of the New Testaments writings in His words to the Apostle John, *"What thou seest, write in a book"*[129] The Lord Jesus Christ's mind and counsel come unto the believers in writing, the Bible, as a merciful and steadfast relief against all that is confusion, darkness, and uncertainty, including the Roman Catholic Church.

In the Bible, the Spirit of God has portrayed the Church of Rome as wonderful in the eyes of the world; but to the eyes of true believers she is shown to be *"that great city that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!"*[130] To the believers, He has broken her magic spells; he has lifted her mask, and as something already come to pass, He publishes her fall, *"Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird."*[131]

The believers of old—the Vaudois, the Waldenses, the Lollards, and the Bohemians—saw those things clearly and were thereby fortified and equipped. Likewise throughout the 600 years of the Inquisition, and to the Reformers, the office of the papacy was "the Man of Sin" and the Antichrist. The Imperial Roman Empire, revived as the so-called "Holy Roman Empire", they saw as the Babylon of Revelation 17 and 18. These doctrines were embodied in their Confessions of Faith and sealed by the blood of countless martyrs. Confidently they saw that the papacy and those who believe in its system would most surely be terminated, as the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming".[132] In the meantime, the Gospel of Christ saves multitudes from her. The Lord Christ Jesus, the Exalted Head of the Church, and His Sovereign Spirit give comfort and victory, for *"The gospel is the power of God unto salvation."*[133]. All of this is absolutely established on the unwavering and unchangeable Authority of the Lord God in His Written Word. *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."* II Timothy 3:16-17 ♦

[126] I Timothy 4:3, *"Forbidding to marry"*: see Flannery, Vatican Council II Documents, No. 63 *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, Sec. 16, Vol. I, p. 893. Re *"abstain from meats"*: see Canon 1251.
[127] 2001 *Our Sunday Visitor's Catholic Almanac* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 2001) p. 343.
[128] Hebrews 1:2
[129] Revelation 1:11
[130] Revelation 18:16
[131] Revelation 18:2
[132] II Thessalonians 2:8.
[133] Romans 1:16