

## Catholicism

There are many Protestants today who view Catholicism with tremendous favor and respect, believing that it is simply another “flavor” of Christianity. This may come as a surprise to many but I believe this view is incorrect. In my opinion Catholicism is *entirely* different from what Protestantism teaches about God, salvation, and the Bible. It is not merely a different way of doing things; it is another religion entirely, and it is as different from Biblical Christianity as Islam or Buddhism.

What I would like to do is take some time to examine Catholicism in detail. In order to accomplish this I have divided this paper into two parts. The first part focuses on Catholic doctrines and compares them to what the Bible actually teaches. The second part focuses on the history of the Catholic church.

It is my hope that after reading this paper you will have a much better understanding of what Catholicism is and how it is diametrically opposed to Biblical Christianity.

### Part 1: Doctrines of Salvation

This section is intended to cover various official doctrines of the Catholic Church. I make no claim that all Catholics believe these points, but I do believe that they represent the official stance of Catholicism. There are many more points I could have mentioned (mass, Mary, celibacy, statues, praying to the dead, etc.) but since space is limited I chose to focus on its teachings regarding salvation.

#### 1. Salvation by Works

The Catholic Church firmly rejects the idea of salvation by grace alone and believes in salvation by works. I first discovered this when reading the Council of Trent, a document prepared by a council held from 1545-1563 and reaffirmed by Vatican II in the 1960's. I quote:

SIXTH SESSION, CANONS CONCERNING JUSTIFICATION: "If anyone says that justifying faith is *nothing else than confidence in divine mercy*, which remits sins for Christ's sake, or that it is this confidence alone that justifies us, **LET HIM BE ANATHEMA**" (Canons Concerning Justification, Canon 12).

SIXTH SESSION, CANONS CONCERNING JUSTIFICATION: "If anyone says that the justice received is not preserved and also not increased before God through good works, but that those works are merely the fruits and signs of justification obtained, but not the cause of its increase, **LET HIM BE ANATHEMA**" (Canons Concerning Justification, Canon 24).

One could not ask for a clearer denial of salvation by grace alone<sup>1</sup>. The Catholic Church damns anyone who believes that salvation is “nothing else than confidence in divine mercy”, and further damns anyone who believes that good works are merely the *fruit* of salvation instead of their *cause*.<sup>2</sup> Those who think that believing in Jesus is all that it takes to be saved – that no good deeds on our part can add to or take away from our salvation – are condemned by the Catholic Church as heretics that are bound for hell<sup>3</sup>. This stands in stark contrast with the teachings of the Bible:

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: **Not of works**, lest any man should boast."  
Ephesians 2:8-9

**"Not by works of righteousness** which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;" Titus 3:5

"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith **without the deeds of the law**." Romans 3:28

There are many more Scriptures that I could quote but the point is very clear. Those who believe that “man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law”, as it says in Romans 3:28, are damned to eternal torment by the Catholic Church, which teaches that many good deeds are required in order to merit salvation<sup>4</sup>. However, this idea of “faith alone” is exactly what the Bible teaches. This by itself should be enough to make it clear that the Catholic Church is not a Christian church, for God has made it very plain what He thinks of salvation by works. Galatians 3:1-7 says this:

"O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, **Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?** Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain. He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that **they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham**." Galatians 3:1-7

"I do not frustrate the grace of God: for **if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain**." Galatians 2:21

God condemns the Catholic idea that we are made perfect by “good deeds” in the strongest possible terms. This is more than a heresy; it is another gospel entirely. You cannot be saved by a works gospel. I have heard Catholics claim that they do believe in salvation by grace,

<sup>1</sup> Or salvation by faith alone, which is what “confidence in divine mercy” is.

<sup>2</sup> In the book of James the point is made that works are a sign of living faith. It does not make the point that works are the cause of that faith or that the works are required to preserve salvation.

<sup>3</sup> And such people were burned at the stake, by the thousands, for centuries during the Middle Ages. No apologies for this have ever been issued. (Part 2 of this document will discuss this in greater detail.)

<sup>4</sup> Deeds such as baptism, avoiding mortal sins, penance, the sacraments, and being a member of the Catholic Church.

and then go on to define grace as the ability to keep the law so that they can perform the good works that God requires for them to eventually become saved<sup>5</sup>. This is a horrible perversion of the gospel. Anyone who believes that their good works are going to purchase them entrance into Heaven are lost sinners on the road to Hell. Believing that your good works are going to eventually purchase your salvation is *completely different* from believing that Christ's life and atoning death on the cross has already purchased your salvation.

## 2. Salvation by Sacraments

But the differences go even further. Catholicism teaches that baptism is required for salvation:

**SEVENTH SESSION, CANONS ON BAPTISM:** "If anyone says that baptism is optional, that is, *not necessary for salvation*, **LET HIM BE ANATHEMA**" (Council of Trent, Canons on Baptism, Canon 5).

"Baptism not only *purifies from all sins*<sup>6</sup>, but also makes the neophyte 'a new creature,' an adopted son of God, who has become a 'partaker of the divine nature,' member of Christ and co-heir with him, and a temple of the Holy Spirit." (1994 Catholic Catechism, pg. 322, #1265)

"By Baptism *all sins are forgiven*, original sin and all personal sins, as well as all punishment for sin." (1994 Catholic Catechism, pg. 321, #1263. Also see pg. 257, #985)

And that the sacraments are required as well:

"The Church affirms that for believers the sacraments of the New Covenant are *necessary for salvation*." (1994 Catholic Catechism, pg. 292, #1129)

"There are seven sacraments in the Church: Baptism, Confirmation or Chrismation, Eucharist, Penance, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony." (1994 Catholic Catechism, pg. 289, #1113)

It is clear that the Catholic Church does *not* believe that Christ's death on the cross was sufficient to save anyone; in order to be saved you have to add a great many things to Christ's death – things such as good works, baptism, sacraments, and so forth. Catholicism teaches that faith in Christ is not enough to be saved, and if you believe what the Bible says in passages such as these then you will be lost to Hell forever:

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<sup>5</sup> I don't have the space to get into it here, but Catholicism teaches that salvation is a process, not a one-time event. It is a process because it requires a lifetime of good works to achieve, followed by time spent in purgatory, where you spend a very long time suffering for your sins. Only after all this is one finally saved. The idea of "being saved" is largely a Protestant idea, and is condemned by Catholic doctrine.

<sup>6</sup> Thus flatly contradicting the Bible: "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (*not the putting away of the filth of the flesh*, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 3:21). Baptism is a "figure" (a symbol) – an act of obedience to God and a sign that we have been saved. The Bible denies that it "purifies us from all sins".

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, **thou shalt be saved**. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Romans 10:8-10)

"And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and **thou shalt be saved**, and thy house." (Acts 16:31)

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: **Not of works**, lest any man should boast." Ephesians 2:8-9

The Bible clearly teaches that if you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ you *will* be saved. There is no "might be saved" or "could be saved" or "will be saved as long as you don't commit any mortal sins" – it's just a plain, firm statement that is repeated over and over in the Scriptures. Yet Catholicism teaches that it is a *sin* to believe that you have already been saved<sup>7</sup> – the sin of presumption! I quote here from the Catholic Encyclopedia:

"Presumption is here considered as a vice opposed to the theological virtue of hope. It may also be regarded as a product of pride. It may be defined as the condition of a soul which, because of a badly regulated reliance on God's mercy and power, **hopes for salvation without doing anything to deserve it**<sup>8</sup>, or for pardon of his sins without repenting of them."

I can't imagine believing that you can possibly *deserve* to be saved! That is what Catholicism is all about: building up enough credits with God in order to merit entrance to Heaven (in other words, "deserving it"). Yet the Bible is clear that you can *know* that you are saved. It is not a process, but a one-time event:

"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may **know that ye have eternal life**, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." 1 John 5:13

"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." John 3:36

"He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, **hath everlasting life**, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." John 5:24

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me **hath everlasting life**." John 6:47

"And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and **believeth on him**, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day." John 6:40

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<sup>7</sup> Remember, Catholicism teaches that salvation is a process, not a one-time event.

<sup>8</sup> In other words, having not yet lived a life of "good works".

Notice how it says that we *have* eternal life. Salvation is not something that I am looking forward to at some future date, if I play all my cards right; it is something that I *already have*. The Catholic idea that my salvation is a long process that requires good works on my part completely contradicts the Bible.

### 3. Salvation by the Catholic Church

Despite what many people might tell you, Catholicism teaches that salvation can *only* be obtained through the Catholic Church and that all non-Catholics will be damned to Hell forever:

"The Second Vatican Council's Decree on Ecumenism explains: 'For it is through **Christ's Catholic Church alone**, which is the universal help toward salvation, that the fullness of the means of salvation can be obtained.'" (1994 Catholic Catechism, Pg. 215, #816)

"...all salvation comes from Christ the Head through the [Catholic] Church which is his Body: Basing itself on Scripture and Tradition, the Council teaches that **the Church**, a pilgrim now on earth, is **necessary for salvation...**" (1994 Catholic Catechism, Pg. 224, #846)

Nowhere in the Scripture can one find the idea that membership in *any* church is required for salvation. Salvation is accomplished by faith in Jesus Christ, not through church membership:

"For whosoever shall **call upon the name of the Lord** shall be saved."  
Romans 10:13

"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." John 3:36

This doctrine springs from the Catholic belief that that the sacraments are required for salvation. Since only the Catholic Church has the sacraments that they claim are necessary for salvation, by their teachings you therefore cannot be saved apart from the Catholic Church. In order to be saved you must be a member of the Catholic Church, participate in the sacraments, be baptized into the Catholic Church, avoid mortal sins, and suffer in purgatory. That is a very far cry from "believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved".

### 4. Purification by Purgatory

We are still not done. On top of all of this, Catholicism denies the idea that Christ suffered the punishment for our sins on the cross. It teaches that we must still suffer for them in a place called purgatory:

"All who die in God's grace and friendship<sup>9</sup>, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to **achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven.**" (1994 Catholic Catechism, pg. 2658, #1030)

"The Church gives the name Purgatory to this final purification of the elect..." (1994 Catholic Catechism, pg. 268-269, #1031)

"The Church formulated her doctrine of faith on Purgatory especially at the Councils of Florence and Trent<sup>10</sup>." (1994 Catholic Catechism, pg. 268-269, #1031)

The concept of purgatory (by their own admission) is found nowhere in the Bible and has zero Scriptural support, and yet it is taught as doctrine by the Catholic Church. Purgatory is based on the idea that Christ did not suffer for my sins or purify me of them: I must still suffer for them before I can be made acceptable to God, and purgatory is where that happens. Catholicism teaches that Christ's death did very little for us: it doesn't save us (without our good deeds we can never see Heaven), it doesn't guarantee us salvation (one mortal sin would cause everything to be lost), and it doesn't even free us from the punishment of our sins (I must still suffer for them in Purgatory).

Once again, the Bible is very clear about this:

"Much more then, being now **justified by his blood**, we shall be saved from wrath through him." Romans 5:9

"Being **justified freely** by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:" Romans 3:24

"And such were some of you: but ye are **washed**, but ye are **sanctified**, but ye are **justified** in the name of the Lord Jesus..." 1 Corinthians 6:11

"...but now once in the end of the world hath he (Jesus) appeared to **put away sin** by the sacrifice of himself." Hebrews 9:26

"There is therefore now **no condemnation** to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Romans 8:1

It couldn't be more clear: the Bible teaches that I *am* washed, sanctified, and justified. Not "will be", but "am". Christ paid for it all; there is nothing left for me to do. As the old hymn said, "nothing in my hand I bring / simply to Thy cross I cling." Purgatory is yet another attempt at a works gospel: Catholicism teaches that *I* must earn my way to Heaven, *I* must deserve salvation, and *I* must take the punishment for my sins. Christ was clear that when I die I will go to be with Him – not go to suffer in a place called purgatory:

"And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." (Luke 23:43)

<sup>9</sup> Note that it says "all who die in God's grace" – meaning, of course, all those who die having led a life of good works.

<sup>10</sup> Meaning, of course, that the idea is found nowhere in the Bible. The Catholic Encyclopedia even comes out and says that this idea has no Scriptural basis.

"For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:" (Philippians 1:22)

"And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;" (Luke 16:22)

## 5. Forgiveness by Indulgences

Indulgences were one of the major causes of the Reformation. Martin Luther's attempt to rid the Catholic Church of indulgences failed, for they are still a part of official Catholic doctrine. They are defined in the dictionary as follows: "A partial remission of the temporal punishment, esp. purgatorial atonement, that is still due for a sin or sins after absolution." The Catholic Catechism explains them this way:

"Through indulgences the faithful can obtain the remission of temporal punishment resulting from sin for themselves and also for the souls in Purgatory." (1994 Catholic Catechism, pg. 374, #1498)

"Since the faithful departed now being purified are also members of the same communion of saints, one way we can help them is to obtain indulgences for them, so that the temporal punishments due for their sins may be remitted." (1994 Catholic Catechism, pg. 371-372, #1479)

The Catholic Church teaches that one can help the dead escape purgatory by obtaining indulgences from the Church! This is more salvation-by-works doctrine: not only can your good works help forgive your sins, but they can also help forgive the sins of *the dead*. This is very different from the simplicity of the gospel:

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Ephesians 2:8, 10

## 6. Forgiveness by Penance

The Catholic Church teaches that asking God to forgive our sins is not enough; we must also perform penance:

"Absolution takes away sin, but it does not remedy all the disorders sin has caused. Raised up from sin, **the sinner must still recover his full spiritual health by doing something more to make amends** for the sin: he must 'make satisfaction for' or 'expiate' his sins. This satisfaction is also called 'penance.'" (1994 Catholic Catechism, pg. 366, #1459)

"The Church also commends almsgiving, indulgences, and works of penance undertaken **on behalf of the dead**:" (1994 Catholic Catechism, pg. 269, #1032)

In other words, the sinner must “make amends” through penance if they wish to return to “full spiritual health”. This is talking about restoring our relationship with *God*, not our relationship with other people. Simply asking God for forgiveness is *not enough!* This is another attempt at a salvation-by-works doctrine: if you *really* want to be forgiven then you’ve got to do something to *earn* God’s favor. You can even perform penance *for the dead* to earn God’s favor for them!

This stands in stark contrast to the Word of God:

"And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is **no more offering for sin**." (Hebrews 10:17-18)

"For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee." Psalm 86:5

Forgiveness is a free gift from God, purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ: it cannot be earned or deserved.

## 7. The Catholic Defense

I have heard Catholics claim that they do not need Scripture to support their doctrines<sup>11</sup> because there are sources of doctrine outside the Bible. Catholicism teaches that the Pope and church tradition can also provide truth, and Catholics often base their doctrines on sources of truth outside the Bible. (The sinlessness of Mary, for instance, was made doctrine by a Papal decree).

However, God made it *very* clear that the Bible is all we need, and there is *no room to add to it*:

"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." 2 Timothy 3:16-17

"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." (Proverbs 30:5-6)

These verses sum it up well. They clearly state that that the Bible is given to us that we may be furnished unto *all* good works – not just some, but *all*. If the Bible is all-sufficient then we don’t need the Book of Mormon or the decrees of the Pope to tell us what Christianity really is.

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<sup>11</sup> Freely admitting that their doctrines have no Scriptural basis, which is my point.

More than that, there is no evidence in Scripture to support the office of the Pope or papal infallibility. Catholicism bases its entire church on a single passage in Matthew 16:

13 When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

14 And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

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

20 Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.

Catholicism claims that the rock Jesus was referring to was Peter, saying that the word "Peter" means "rock". This is not actually the case; "Peter" refers to a small pebble, which is very different from the massive foundation stone that Christ was referring to. The Bible is quite clear that the rock is *Christ*:

"... for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and **that Rock was Christ**." 1 Corinthians 10:4

"And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being **the chief corner stone**;" Ephesians 2:20

"The stone which the builders refused is become the **head stone of the corner**." Psalm 118:22

"...by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth... This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become **the head of the corner**." Acts 4:10-11

"... the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made **the head of the corner**," 1 Peter 2:7<sup>12</sup>

"For who is God save the LORD? or **who is a rock save our God**?" Psalm 18:31

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<sup>12</sup> Note that not even Peter claims that Peter was the rock!

"... I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. **He is the Rock...**" Deuteronomy 32:3-4

Nowhere does the Bible mention a Pope. Nowhere does Peter act like a Pope<sup>13</sup>. Nowhere does the Bible give the Pope the authority to issue infallible decrees that overrule the Bible<sup>14</sup>. Stating that the Pope is the head of *the church*<sup>15</sup> is blasphemous, as only Christ has that position:

"And **he (Christ) is the head of the body, the church**: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he (Christ) might have the preeminence." Colossians 1:18

"And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him (**Christ**) **to be the head over all things** to the church," Ephesians 1:22

"But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is **the head, even Christ**:" Ephesians 4:15

Catholicism teaches that the Pope is the *supreme* pastor and teacher of *all* Christians:

"The Roman Pontiff... as **supreme** pastor and teacher of **all the faithful...**" (1994 Catholic Catechism, pg. 235, #891)

Yet the Bible says that the *Holy Spirit* is the "supreme pastor and teacher":

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, **he shall teach you all things**, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." John 14:26

"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, **he will guide you into all truth...**" John 16:13

Without a Pope, apostolic authority, and tradition, the Catholic Church has no way to support its many unbiblical doctrines. If you have based your entire faith on the office of the Papacy, what is left when the Bible claims that there *is no such office* and that the many new unbiblical doctrines issued by the Pope are not worth the paper they are printed on?

## 8. Conclusion

By this point it should be obvious that the Catholic Church is not a Christian Church – and I haven't even touched on the subject of idolatry, the worship of Mary, or many other pagan

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<sup>13</sup> In fact, there is no evidence that Peter was ever in Rome at all; when Paul wrote his letter to the Romans he greeted many people that were in Rome, but Peter was not one of them.

<sup>14</sup> As happened when the Pope declared Mary to have been born without the inherited sin of Adam and lived an entirely sinless life, thus contradicting the Biblical doctrine that "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God."

<sup>15</sup> As opposed to the head of "a church", for instance.

Catholic doctrines<sup>16</sup>. Catholic salvation is not salvation through faith alone; it is salvation by works, and the gospel of salvation by works is not capable of saving anyone.

I want to be very clear here: anyone who believes in Catholicism's official stance regarding salvation is not a Christian, is not saved, and is going to spend eternity in Hell unless they repent and come to Christ. The Catholic Church is a pagan cult, full of "doctrines of devils"<sup>17</sup>, and should not be considered another denomination of Christianity any more than Islam is.

## Part 2: History

This section is dedicated to explaining the history of the Catholic Church. It is commonly assumed by many that the Catholic Church was the *only* church through the ages and that this did not change until the Reformation. This is not the case: as soon as Catholicism started to appear there have been those who opposed it and who held beliefs that today we would call Protestant. The Protestant church has always existed.

### Persecutions During The First Millennium

**Augustine** (354 – 430) has been called the founder of Roman Catholicism, for he was instrumental in establishing many key doctrines of the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church has acknowledged him to be one of their major teachers and canonized him as a saint. Augustine taught that the entire Bible should be interpreted allegorically, and that:

"the Catholic Church, in its empirical form, was the kingdom of Christ, that the millennial kingdom had commenced with the appearing of Christ, and was therefore an accomplished fact." (Encyclopedia Britannica)

He is the father of amillennialism. He also taught that the sacraments were an actual means of grace, that Mary was sinless, that infant baptism was necessary (and that infants who were not baptized were lost), that there was a purgatory, and that the church had authority *over* the Bible (as opposed to the church being *under* the authority of the Bible). The Catholic Church began to rise in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, claiming that it was the only true church and that it had the power to execute those who disagreed with it.

Augustine also laid the foundation for the persecution of Protestants, teaching that:

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<sup>16</sup> For instance, the Pope (declared to be infallible on issues of morality and doctrine) has urged people to worship Mary as a co-redeemer with Christ and pray to her for forgiveness of sins. Worshiping anyone other than God cannot be called anything other than paganism.

<sup>17</sup> Catholicism forbids its priests from getting married. Forbidding people to marry is called a "doctrine of devils" in 1 Timothy 4:1-3. These are God's words, not mine.

"It is, indeed, better that men should be brought to serve God by instruction than by fear of punishment, or pain. ***But because the former means are better, the latter must not therefore be neglected.*** Many must often be brought back to their Lord, like wicked servants, by the rod of temporal suffering, before they attain the highest grade of religious development."

**Leo the Great**, the first Pope, drew upon this teaching from Augustine and declared that death was the appropriate penalty for heresy.

While this was going on a group called the **Donatists** had formed, opposed to Augustine's teachings. They taught that the church should only be comprised of those who showed evidence of repentance and faith. Because the Donatists (also called Puritans for their belief that the church should be pure) refused to join the centralized church system and rejected Augustine's teachings, the Catholic Church joined with the secular authorities of the day and put many of the Donatist leaders to death and forced the rest into exile. This was a pattern that would be repeated many times during the next fifteen centuries.

It is commonly assumed that the Bible did not become available until the time of Gutenberg. This is not the case; there were a number of editions of the Bible available during the first millennium. A version in Old Latin was translated around 157 AD, and Coptic and Syriac versions were made around that same time. A Gothic and Ethiopian translation was done in the fourth century. In the fifth century the Bible was translated into Roman, Indian, Persian, Armenian, Scythian, Samaritan, Egyptian, Georgian, and Armenian. In the sixth century the Gregorian translation was made. In the seventh century a German and Anglo-Saxon translation was made. The Persic translation was made in the eighth century, and the Bohemian and Slavonic versions were made in the ninth century. An Arabic translation was made in the tenth century.

In 660 AD a group called the **Paulicians** arose. This group had obtained a copy of the New Testament and sought to establish their faith strictly upon the teachings of the Bible. They rejected the teachings of Catholicism, and for this they were hunted down by the Catholic Church and executed (usually by being burned at the stake) *and their Bibles were burned*. This persecution caused them to flee their home of Greece and scatter all around the world. Wherever they went they were persecuted and executed by the Catholic Church because they rejected its teachings. Those who persecuted them took care to burn their Bibles as well, for their Bibles had given rise to their faith in "Christ alone".

## **Persecutions During 1000 - 1500**

By the time the year 1000 rolled around the Catholic Church had become the dominant church of the day. The Pope had succeeded in controlling all of the churches in the Western world and had imposed his dogmas on everyone, including the kings of the world. Yet through all this time there were groups opposed to Catholicism – groups like the Albigenses and Waldensians that the Catholic Church did its very best to hunt down and burn at the stake. These groups were hounded all over the world for a single reason: they would not accept the authority of the Catholic Church or its Pope and sought to live solely by the Word of God.

During the reign of **Pope Benedict VII (1012-1024)**, a synod was held at Toulouse “to consider the most effectual method to rid the province of Albigenses; and though the whole sect was in 1022 said to have been burnt, yet the emigrants from Bulgaria, coming in colonies into France, kept the seed sown, the churches recruited...” (Orchard, p. 178). The Catholic Church had done its best to burn alive every last member of this group of Christians, and yet they still continued to grow.

What was this hated group like? A Catholic inquisitor wrote:

“They had the Old and New Testament in the vulgar tongue; and they teach and learn so well, that he had seen and heard a country clown recount all Job, word for word; and divers, who could perfectly deliver all the New Testament; and that men and women, little and great, day and night, cease not to learn and teach” (Orchard, p. 266).

An old manuscript outlining an 11<sup>th</sup> century Waldensian creed reads “In articles of faith, the authority of the Holy Scripture is the highest authority; and for that reason it is the standard of judging; so that whatever doth not agree with the word of God is deservedly to be rejected and avoided. The sacraments of the church of Christ are two, baptism and Lord's supper. That is the church of Christ which hears the pure doctrine of Christ, and observes the ordinances instituted by Him, in whatever place it exists” (Jones, *History of the Christian Church*, II, p. 56). For these beliefs the Catholic Church hunted them down, burned them alive, confiscated their goods, and burned their Bibles.

**Pope Honorius II (1124 – 1130)** stated this in his Decretals:

“And all heretics, of both sexes and of every name, we damn to perpetual infamy; we declare hostility against them; we account them accursed, and their goods confiscated; nor can they ever enjoy their property, or their children succeed to their inheritance; inasmuch as they grievously offend against the Eternal as well as the temporal king” (Wylie, *The Papacy*, 18988, p. 137).

What was their great heresy? Rejecting the authority of the Catholic Church and refusing to bow down to the Pope. The Albigenses, for their rejection of the Catholic Church, were persecuted beginning in the middle of the twelfth century, and by one hundred years later they had all been executed. In 1146 a group of believers arose in the city of Cologne and were labeled as heretics because they denied infant baptism, purgatory, the intercession of the saints, and other Catholic doctrines.

Around this time a group called the Waldensians arose. They translated the Bible into the common languages of the day (something that the Catholic Church had strictly forbidden) and distributed it through the entire Western world. A 13<sup>th</sup> century Catholic Inquisitor by the name of Reinerius said this about the Waldensians:

“They can repeat by heart, in the vulgar tongue, the whole text of the New Testament and great part of the Old: and, adhering to the text alone, they reject decretals<sup>18</sup> and decrees with the sayings and expositions of the Saints” (Faber, p. 492).

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<sup>18</sup>Statements issued by the Pope, said to be binding on all Christians.

For this the Catholic Church did its very best to burn them all alive. **Lucius III (1181 – 1185)** issued in decree in 1181 saying:

"We declare all Puritans, Paterines, Poor of Lyons [Waldensians], &c. &c., to lie under a perpetual curse for teaching baptism and the Lord's Supper otherwise than the church of Rome" (Orchard, p. 194).

These Christians did not believe in transubstantiation, that the sacraments could save, or that baptism saved, and for that they were labeled as heretics, hunted down, and burned at the stake.

**Celestine III (1191 – 1198)** ordered both those who believed in the Bible and the translations they held to be burned. "In 1193, the pope sent Guy and Reiner, two legates, into France, with instructions of the most sanguinary description. Instead of making converts of the heretics, their orders were to burn their leaders, confiscate their goods, and disperse their flocks" (Orchard, p. 204).

The **inquisition** formally began under **Pope Innocent III (1198 – 1216)**. The persecution of those who rejected Catholicism had been going on for six hundred years by this point, but Innocent III systematized it. He prohibited people from reading the Bible in their own language and ordered that heretics should be put to death. In the year 1215 Innocent III issued a statement that said this:

"that they shall be seized for trial and penalties, who engage in the translation of the sacred volumes, or who hold secret conventicles, or who assume the office of preaching without the authority of their superiors; against whom process shall be commenced, without any permission of appeal" (P. P. Callender, *Illustration of Popery*, 1838, p. 387).

Innocent III ordered that the Waldensians should be searched for diligently and executed *because they read the Bible in the language of the day*. According to a Catholic inquisitor, the Waldensians held that:

"They despise the decretals and the sayings and expositions of holy men and cleave only to the text of Scripture. ... They contend that the doctrine of Christ and his Apostles is sufficient to salvation without any Church statutes and ordinances, and affirm that the traditions of the Church are no better than the traditions of the Pharisees, insisting, moreover, that greater stress is laid on the observation of human tradition than on the keeping of the law of God." (Armitage, *A History of the Baptists*, I, p. 308).

The persecution of these people began in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, and was still going on in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, five hundred years later.

What did the Catholic Church do to these people for their rejection of its authority? One historian put it this way:

"Many of them were frozen to death, others were cast from high precipices and dashed to pieces. Some were driven into caverns, and by filling the mouths of their caves with fagots were suffocated. Others were hanged in cold blood, ripped open and disemboweled, pierced with prongs, drowned, racked limb from limb till death relieved them; were

stabbed, worried by dogs, burned, or crucified with their heads downward. Fox relates one case in which four hundred mothers who had taken refuge in the Cave of Castelluzzo, some 2000 feet above the valley, entered by a projected crag, were smothered with their infants in their arms. And all the time that this gentle blood was flowing, that sanctified beauty known as Innocent III, drank it in like nectar from Paradise. Of the Wandensians and other murdered sheep of Christ, he said: 'They are like Samson's foxes. They appear to be different, but their tails are tied together.' The blood-thirst of the Dominicans earned for them the stigma of 'Comini Canes,' or the 'Lord's Dogs'" (Armitage, *A History of the Baptists*, I, pp. 311-2).

All of this was done by the command of the Pope – a man that the Catholic Church teaches is infallible in matters of doctrine and morality. This persecution continued unabated for *fifteen centuries*. Wherever Christianity went, the Catholic Church tried its very best to stamp it out.

It is not possible to do anything other than mention a small sampling of cases; even a partial treatment of Catholicism's persecution of Christians would fill an entire book. Over its history *millions* of people were executed for rejecting its heresies and believing in Christ alone. These heretics were sought in every nation on earth so that they might be burned alive *and their Bibles might be destroyed*. This is not a matter of one or two isolated cases; this is a pattern that started with Augustine and continued unabated for fifteen centuries.

To say that the Catholic Church executed millions of people is not an exaggeration. One historian said this:

"In the year 1209, a formidable army of cross-bearers, of forty days' service, was put in motion, destined to destroy all heretics. . . . The cruelties of these Crusaders appear to have had no parallel; in a few months there were sacrificed about **two hundred thousand lives**, and barbarities practiced, before unheard of, all which met the approbation of Innocent the 3<sup>rd</sup>. Two large cities, Beizers and Carcassone, were reduced to ashes, and thousands of others, driven from their burning houses, were wandering in the woods and mountains, sinking daily under the pressure of want" (Orchard, *Concise History of the Baptists*, p. 211).

The Spanish Inquisition alone, under the reign of Pope Paul IV (1555-59) is calculated to have claimed the lives of 150,000 people. Many of these died by unimaginable tortures (see Appendix A). In the sixteenth century, as the Reformation began to get under way, it is estimated that 900,000 Protestants were martyred by the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church did its very best to completely wipe off the face of the earth entire groups of Christians: Waldensians, Albigenses, Lollards, and others – groups that had hundreds of thousands of followers – to the point of *sending out armies* to hunt them down and execute them. The Catholic Church did succeed in completely destroying some of these groups. In 1847 John Dowling, in his book *History of Romanism*, estimated that the Catholic Church slaughtered *50 million people* between 606 AD and 1850. Why were these people put to death? Because they refused to bow down to Rome and sought to live solely by the Word of God.

Catholicism's hatred of the Word of God through the centuries is legendary. I've already talked about how the Church confiscated people's copies of the Bible and burned them; this is a pattern that continued unabated for centuries. **Pope Gregory IX (1227 – 1241)** prohibited people

from owning Bibles and prohibited Bible translations from being made. The **Council of Toulouse (1129)** and the **Council of Tarragona (1234)** forbade people to possess *or read* translations of the Bible that were made in the common languages (the only languages that people could actually understand). Those who were found to possess Bibles (or portions thereof) were executed and their Bibles were burned.

I cannot possibly mention every Pope that stood up to oppose anyone who dared to reject official Catholic doctrine. **Alexander IV (1254 – 1261)** issued 38 bulls against “heretics”. **Pope Urban IV (1261 – 1264)** issued an anathema against “heretics” and all who opposed the Inquisition as soon as he became a Pope. **Pope Clement IV (1265 – 1268)** enlarged the Inquisition and broadened its scope. **Pope Gregory X (1271 – 1276)** ordered that all copies of the Bible that were translated into the common tongues of the day to be brought to Bishops and burned. **Pope Nicholas IV (1288 – 1292)** ordered many punishments to be inflicted both on “heretics” and on those who helped them. **Pope Honorius IV (1285 – 1287)** enacted two laws against heretics and affirmed the prohibition on owning copies of the Bible. **Pope John XXI (1316 – 1334)** ordered the Inquisitors to hunt down and destroy the Waldensians, as did **Pope Clement VI (1342 – 1352)**. This went on, and on, and on, starting at the time of Augustine. Christians were already being persecuted when the Reformation broke out; once it began to spread the persecution only intensified.

For fifteen centuries the Catholic Church executed whoever it could find that rejected its authority and burned any Bibles it could find that were translated into the common languages of the day. All of this was ordered by men who claimed to be Christ's infallible and holy representative on earth (the Pope). For centuries before the Reformation the Catholic Church never failed to persecute those it found that rejected its authority and believed in Christ alone.

As the Reformation began to get under way the **Council of Trent (1545 – 1564)** was held. The Council of Trent was reaffirmed by the Pope during Vatican II in the 1960's; it has not expired or been rescinded. I have already discussed some of the Council of Trent's teachings, but besides doctrinal matters *it also placed severe restrictions on owning Bibles:*

“Translations of the Old Testament may also be allowed, but only to learned and pious men, **at the discretion of the bishop**, provided they use them merely as elucidations of the vulgate versions, in order to understand the Holy Scriptures, and not as the sacred text itself. But translations of the New Testament, made by authors of the first class of this index, are allowed to no one, since little advantage, but much danger, generally arises from reading them. If notes accompany the versions which are allowed to be read, or are joined to the vulgate edition, they may be permitted to be read by the same persons as the version, after the suspected places have been purged by the theological faculty of some Catholic university, or by the general inquisitor. ...”

“Inasmuch as it is manifest from experience, that **if the Holy Bible translated into the vulgar tongue, be indiscriminately allowed to any one, the temerity of men will cause more evil than good to arise from it**, it is, on that point, referred to the judgment of the bishops or inquisitors, who may, by the advice of the priest or confessor, permit the reading of the Bible, translated into the vulgar tongue by Catholic authors, to those persons whose faith and piety they apprehend will be augmented, and not injured by it; and this permission they must have in writing. But if any one shall have the presumption to read or possess it without such written permission, he shall not receive absolution until he have first delivered up such Bible to the ordinary.

Booksellers, however, who shall sell, or otherwise dispose of Bibles in the vulgar tongue, to any person not having such permission, shall forfeit the value of the books, to be applied by the bishop to some pious use, and be subjected to such other penalties as the bishop shall judge proper, according to the quality of the offence. **But regulars shall neither read nor purchase such Bibles without a special license from their superiors.**

"Finally, it is enjoined on all the faithful, that no one presume to keep or read any book contrary to these rules, or prohibited by this index. But if **any one keep or read any books composed by heretics, or the writings of any author suspected of heresy, or false doctrine, he shall instantly incur the sentence of excommunication;** and those who read or keep works interdicted on another account, besides the **mortal sin**<sup>19</sup> committed, shall be **severely punished** at the will of the bishops."

These rules were affixed to the Index of Prohibited Books and were constantly reaffirmed by popes in the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. These publications have never been rescinded. One person said this about it:

"It is true that the Council of Trent did not *absolutely* forbid the reading of the Scriptures. It did allow a few exceptions. The priests were allowed to read the Latin Bible. Bishops and inquisitors were allowed to grant license for certain faithful Catholics to read the Scriptures in Latin as long as these Scriptures were accompanied by Catholic notes and if it was believed that these people would not be "harmed" by such a reading. ***In practice, though, the proclamations of Trent forbade the reading of the Holy Scriptures to at least nine-tenths of the people.*** Rome's claim to possess authority to determine who can and cannot read the Bible is one of the most blasphemous claims ever made under this sun." (David Cloud, *Rome and the Bible*, p. 214).

## Persecutions During 1500 - 1900

The Catholic Church's attack on Christianity did not stop at the Council of Trent. Its power to inflict harm was greatly weakened after the Reformation, but its attitude and edicts did not change.

**Pope Julius III (1550 – 1555)** issued a series of bulls commanding the destruction of all heretical and Lutheran books. This included vernacular translations of the Bible. **Pope Paul IV (1555 – 1559)** prohibited the possession of Bible translations not permitted by the Inquisition. Those who were found to possess Bibles were executed. During his reign Inquisitors were dispatched from Rome to hunt down and destroy Waldensians. The Pope's Inquisitor-General, Cardinal Alexandrini, obtained a small army of soldiers to pursue the inhabitants of San Sesto, who had fled to avoid their tormentors:

"Tracking them to their hiding-places, in the thickets and the caves of the mountains, they slaughtered many of them; others, who escaped, were

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<sup>19</sup>Remember, the Catholic Church teaches that mortal sins will condemn you to Hell forever. Essentially, this states that if you, a "common person", even dared to own a Bible you were condemned to Hell forever.

pursued with bloodhounds, as if they had been wild beasts. A group of the fugitives climbed to the Apennines, which was an almost inaccessible retreat high in the mountains, and the army was unable to dislodge them. An edict was then issued by the viceroy, who was intent upon the destruction of these separatist Christians, promising a free pardon to all bandits, outlaws, and other criminals who might be willing to undertake the task of scaling the mountains and attacking the strongholds of the Waldenses. In obedience to this summons, there assembled a mob of desperadoes, who were but too familiar with the secret paths of the Apennines. Threading their way through the woods, and clambering over the great rocks, these assassins rushed from every side on the barricades on the summit, and butchering the poor Vaudois. Thus were the inhabitants of San Sexto exterminated, some dying by the sword, some by first, while others were torn by bloodhounds or perished by famine" (Wylie, p. 116)

### His persecution of Christians continued unabated:

"San Sisto was burnt; the women and children, subjected to every species of outrage, scattered through the mountains, where most of them were captured and sent to Cosenza ... Sentence of death was also pronounced against a hundred of the older women; the whole number of captives was reckoned at 1600, all of whom were condemned" (Lea, *The Inquisition in the Spanish Dependences*, 1908, p. 81-82).

"Some were thrown from the tops of towers, or precipitated over cliffs; others were torn with iron whips, and finally beaten to death with fiery brands; and others, smeared with pitch, were burned alive." (Wylie, *Histories of the Waldenses*, pp. 117-8).

"They were all shut up in one house as in a sheep-fold. The executioner went, and bringing out one of them, covered his face with a napkin, or *benda*, as we call it, led him out to a field near the house, and causing him to kneel down, cut his throat with a knife. Then, taking off the bloody napkin, he went and brought out another, whom he put to death after the same manner. In this way the whole number, amounting to eighty-eight men, were butchered" (Wylie, p. 117).

There are so many accounts of Christians being executed by the Catholic Church during the Reformation that I cannot possibly include even a small portion of them. Many of the means of execution were horrible beyond belief. All of this was done at the command of Popes – men who the Catholic Church claimed to be infallible representatives of Christ.

**Pope Pius V (1566 – 1572)** ordered the complete extermination of the Huguenots (the French Protestants). Tens of thousands of Christians were executed on the bases of this command. The Pope wrote this in a papal bull dated March of 1568: "If the crusaders die in the expedition their blood will serve them as a second baptism, washing out all their sins, and they will go with the other martyrs straight to Paradise". Under **Pope Gregory XIII (1572 – 1585)** the Massacre of St. Bartholomew (1572) was carried out, in which tens of thousands of Huguenots were murdered. The news of this massacre was met with celebration by the Pope, who decided to issue a commemorative medal to mark the occasion:

"The pope and his Cardinals proceeded at once to the High Altar, after the dispatches from Paris had been read in Conclae, to offer thanks for 'the great blessing which Heaven vouchsafed to the Roman See and to all Christendom. Salvoes of artillery thundered at nightfall from the ramparts of St. Angelo; the streets were illuminated; and no victory ever achieved by the arms of the Pontificate elicited more tokens of festivity. The pope also, as if resolved that an indestructible edifice of the perversion of mortal feeling which Fanaticism necessarily generates should be transmitted to posterity, gave orders for the execution of a commemorative medal'" (Smedley, II, p. 35)

By 1582 the Bible had been spread so far and wide by the Reformation that all the efforts of the Catholic Church to stamp it out (only a very few of which have been mentioned here) had utterly failed. At this point the Catholic Church issued its own English Bible – the **Rheims-Douay**. The translation was a very poor one, but even at that no Catholic was allowed to read it without a license, and between 1582 and 1750 (a span of 168 years) the New Testament was reprinted only three times and the Old Testament was printed only once. The Catholic Church did not approve of an Italian version until 1778, a German version until 1830, or a French version until the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The Council of Trent prohibited *anyone* from reading the Bible without a license. **Pope Clement VII (1592 – 1605)** forbade anyone from granting these licenses, thus prohibiting the common people from reading the Bible under any circumstances. He then sent "missionaries" to the valley of Piedmont *for the express purpose of destroying all Bibles in that area* and those who owned them. The Foxe's book of Martyrs records the activities of these Catholic "missionaries":

This was followed by a most cruel order, published on January 25, 1655, which decreed that every family of the reformed religion, of whatever rank, residing in Lucerne, St. Giovanni, Bibiana, Campiglione, St. Secondo, Lucernetta, La Torre, Fenile, or Bricheraiisso, should, within three days after the publication thereof, depart from their habitations to such places as were appointed by the duke, on pain of death and confiscation.

This order produced the greatest distress among the unhappy objects of it, as it was enforced with the greatest severity, in the depth of a very severe winter, and the people were driven from their habitations at the time appointed, without even sufficient clothes to cover them: by which many perished in the mountains through the severity of the weather, or want of food. Those who remained behind after the publication of the decree, were murdered by the popish inhabitants, or shot by the troops, and the most horrible barbarities were perpetrated by these ruffians, encouraged by the Roman Catholic priests and monks... (Foxe, abridged, p. 163)

Nicholas Walsh was murdered while in the act of translating the first Irish New Testament; others finished his work, and his translation was published in 1602. **Pope Paul V (1605 – 1621)** made it clear how he felt about all this in a papal bull:

"We excommunicate and anathematize, in the name of Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and by the authority of his blessed Apostles, Peter and Paul, and by our own, all Wickliffites, Hussites,

Lutherans, Calvinists, Hugonots, Anabaptists, and all other Heretics, by whatsoever name they are called, and of whatsoever sect they be; and also, all Schismatics, and those who withdraw themselves, or recede obstinately from the obedience of the Bishop of Rome; as also their Adherents, Receivers, Favourers, and generally any defenders of them: together with all, who, without the authority of the apostolic see, shall knowingly read, keep, or print, any of their books which treat on religion, or by or for any cause whatever, publicly or privately, on any pretense or color defend them" (Ouseley, *A Short Defense of the Old Religion*, 1821, p. 257)

The Pope, and those that followed, made good on his word. During the next fifty years the Catholic Church persuaded the governments of Europe to send out armies after groups such as the Waldensians and kill them, down to the last man. In 1655 the Marquis de Pianez led an army of 15,000 men to find and murder, in horrific ways, all the Waldensians in his land. A priest and a monk accompanied each party of soldiers to make sure that any copies of the Scriptures that were found were destroyed. One historian wrote this about the event:

"From the awful narration of Leger, we select only a few instances; but even these few, however mildly stated, grow, without our intending it, into a group of horrors. Little children were torn from the arms of their mothers, clasped by their tiny feet, and their heads dashed against the rocks; or were held between two soldiers and their quivering limbs torn up by main force. Their mangled bodies were then thrown on the highways or fields, to be devoured by beasts. The sick and the aged were burned alive in their dwellings. Some had their hands and arms and legs lopped off, and fire applied to the severed parts to staunch the bleeding and prolong their suffering. Some were flayed alive, some were roasted alive, some disemboweled; or tied to trees in their own orchards, and their hearts cut out. Some were horribly mutilated, and of others the brains were boiled and eaten by these cannibals. Some were fastened down into the furrows of their own fields, and plowed into the soil as men plow manure into it. Others were buried alive. Fathers were marched to death with the heads of their sons suspended round their necks. Parents were compelled to look on while their children were first outraged, then massacred, before being themselves permitted to die." (Wylie, *History of the Waldenses*, pp. 143,44)

Why was all this done? Why were these people treated this way? Because they believed that they were saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ and refused to become Catholics. Since they would not join the Catholic Church the Catholic Church did everything they could to execute and torment them in the most horrible ways imaginable. All of these things were done by the church that claims, to this day, to be the only true church of Jesus Christ and that it is the only way to be saved. These were not wild rampages or isolated events; this was a systematic effort to execute every last Protestant on the planet, and it lasted from 400 AD to the 19<sup>th</sup> century – a period of 15 centuries. It only stopped with the Catholic Church, by the mercy of God, at last lost all of its temporal power and became unable to continue leading armies into the mountains to kill every last non-Catholic they could find.

I could go on, with account after account like the one mentioned above. All of this is well-documented, and some of it was documented with *great pride* and glee by the Catholic authorities that carried it out. During the reign of **Pope Innocent IX (1676 – 1689)** the entire

nation of the Waldensians was forced from their dwellings in the mountains by an army of around 15,000 men; more than 10,000 were murdered.

In 1693 a Catholic cardinal named Pasquier Quesnel issued a document suggesting that, in his words, “the reading of Holy Scripture is for all”. He suggested that it might be a good thing for the common people to read the Bible. **Pope Clement XI (1700 – 1721)** disagreed with this in the strongest possible terms in a papal bull:

“The suffrages of the aforesaid cardinals ... we declare, condemn, and reprobate respectively, by this our constitution, perpetually in force for ever, all and singular, the propositions before inserted, as false, captious, ill-sounding, offensive to pious ears, scandalous, pernicious, rash, injurious to the church and its practice... whosoever shall teach, defend, publish, or treat, even in disputation, publicly or privately... shall be subject, 'ipso facto,' and without any other declaration, to ecclesiastical censures, and the other punishments decreed by law against the perpetrators of similar things.” (Blakeney, *Pope and its Social Aspects*, pp. 76, 77)

**Pope Benedict XIV (1740 – 1758)** confirmed the Council of Trent's prohibitions against Bible translations. **Pope Pius VII (1800 – 1823)** *condemned* the Bible societies of the 19<sup>th</sup> century – organizations that sought to give copies of the Scriptures to common people:

“We have been truly shocked at this most crafty device, by which the very foundations of religion are undermined...we have, with the utmost care and attention, deliberated upon the measures proper to be adopted by our pontifical authority, in order to remedy and abolish this pestilence as far as possible...” (Elliott, *Delineation of Roman Catholicism*, p. 20)

One Catholic bishop wrote this in 1813, illustrating the attitude of the Catholic Church toward the Bible:

“The promiscuous reading of the Bible is not calculated, nor intended, by God, as the means of conveying religious instruction to the bulk of mankind: for the bulk of mankind cannot read at all; and we do not find any divine commandment as to their being obliged to study letters. ... In conclusion, then, by dearly beloved brethren, I am confident you will not encourage or countenance the distribution of Bibles or Testaments, among the very illiterate persons of your respective congregations, as proper initiatory books of instruction for them (Bishop Milner of Castabala, 1813: M'Gavin, *The Protestant*, p. 166)

**Pope Leo XII (1823 – 1829)** issued a bull in 1824 reaffirming the Council of Trent's prohibitions on Bible ownership and condemned the distribution of Bibles. As of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Catholic Church had not changed its mind on Bible ownership in the least. By this point they had lost much of their power to execute those who held Bibles, but they still condemned it as strongly as they ever had. By this point the Catholic Church had condemned Bible ownership with perfect, unwavering consistency for 1,200 years. Romans 10:17 states that “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God”, but the Roman Catholic Church did its very best for twelve centuries to destroy every copy of the Word of God that they could find.

**Pope Pius VII (1829 – 1830)** condemned the Bible societies of the day that distributed Bibles to people (much like the Gideons do today). **Pope Gregory XVI (1831 – 1846)** also ratified the Council of Trent's prohibitions on Bible ownership. The Catholic Church's attitude toward those who possessed Bibles had not changed: in 1843 on the Portuguese island of Madeira, a woman was imprisoned and condemned to death for being a Protestant and rejecting various Catholic doctrines (idol worship and transubstantiation). She only escaped execution when Protestants from other countries intervened on her behalf. Episodes like this were common in the 19<sup>th</sup> century; there are many instances of people being imprisoned for merely owning a Bible or not being a Catholic.

**Pope Pius IX (1846 – 1878)** issued a letter condemning “those insidious Bible Societies”. Even at this late date, Bibles were so rare that historians say that many Catholics did not even know what a New Testament was. Students who went to papal seminaries did not even see Bibles during their stay at the seminary. The **Vatican I Council in 1870** reaffirmed the Council of Trent's decrees and prohibitions on Bible ownership – and its teachings on salvation. At the time of the American Civil War the Catholic Church was *still* condemning ownership of the Bible and doing all that it could to stop those in its power from owning a copy of the Scriptures.

The Vatican I Council went further than this, declaring that all Popes were infallible and *could not be wrong*. The council issued this statement:

“We teach and declare that by the appointment of our Lord the Roman Church possesses a **superiority of ordinary power over all other churches**, and that this power of jurisdiction of the Roman pontiff, which is truly episcopal, is immediate; to which all, of whatever rite and dignity, **both pastors and faithful, both individually and collectively, are bound**, by their duty of hierarchical subordination and true obedience, to submit not only in matters which belong to faith and morals, but also in those that appertain to the discipline and government of the Church throughout the world, so that the church of Christ may be one flock under **one supreme pastor** through the preservation of unity both of communion and of profession of the same faith with the Roman pontiff. **This is the teaching of Catholic truth, from which no one can deviate without loss of faith and salvation.**”

“And since **by divine right of apostolic primacy the Roman pontiff is placed over the universal church**, we further teach and declare that he is the **supreme judge of the faithful**<sup>20</sup>, and that in all causes the decision of which belongs to the Church recourse may be had to his tribunal, and that **none may reopen the judgment of the apostolic see, that whose authority there is no greater, nor can any lawfully review its judgment.**”

“If then, any shall say that the Roman pontiff has the office merely of inspection or direction, and not **full and supreme power of jurisdiction over the universal church, not only in things which belong to faith and morals, but also in those which relate to the discipline and government of the Church spread throughout the world**; or assert that he possesses merely the principal part, and not the fullness of this supreme power; or that this power which he enjoys is not ordinary or immediate both

<sup>20</sup>Notice that it does not say that *God* is the supreme judge of the faithful – the Pope is. God is not the head of the church; the Pope is. All Christians are not bound to God; they are bound to the Pope. It is not God who is said to have the greatest authority of anyone; no, it is the Pope.

over each and all the church and over each and all the pastors and the faithful; let him be anathema<sup>21</sup>.

"We teach and define that it is a dogma divinely revealed; that the Roman pontiff, when he speaks *ex cathedra*, that is, when in discharge of the office of pastor and doctor of all Christians, by virtue of his supreme apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine regarding faith and morals to be held by the universal Church, by the divine assistance promised to him in blessed Peter, **is possessed of that infallibility** with which the Divine Redeemer willed that His Church should be endowed for defining doctrine regarding faith or morals; and that therefore such definitions of the Roman pontiff are irreformable of themselves, and not from the consent of the Church. But if any one - which may God avert - presume to contradict this our definition: let him be anathema<sup>22</sup>."

Interestingly enough, while the Vatican I Council was going on, at some point someone in the council wanted to refer to a Bible – but no one could find one. No one at the Council had a Bible; not the Pope, not any of the Cardinals, and not even the local Catholic Church. In order to get a Bible they had to borrow one from a Protestant Chaplain at the Prussian Embassy. Incidents like this are easy to understand given that, in 1870, when Rome was made the capitol city of Italy, "a papal law required that copies of the Bible found in the possession of visitors be confiscated" (Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, VI, p. 727).

The Roman Catholic F. Curci stated this in 1879:

**"The New Testament is of all books that which is least studied and read amongst us,** insomuch that **the greater part of the laity,** even such as are instructed and practicing believers, **do not so much as know that such a book exists in the world,** and the majority of the clergy themselves scarcely know more of it than they are obliged to read in the Missal and Breviary" (Curci, *Avvert. Prelim. In N.T.*, cited in Littledale, *Plain Reasons*, p. 94).

In 1897 Pope Leo XIII issued a policy that said this:

"All versions of the vernacular, even by Catholics, are altogether prohibited, unless approved by the Holy See, or published under the vigilant care of the Bishops, with annotations taken from the Fathers of the Church and learned Catholic writers" (Jacobus, *Roman Catholic and Protestant Bibles*, p. 237)

<sup>21</sup>In other words, if you do not believe that the Pope is God Himself, if you disagree with what the Catholic Church teaches about the Pope, you are condemned to spend eternity in Hell no matter what your relationship with Jesus Christ is. After all, the Pope is said to have "supreme power", "whose authority there is none greater", and is "the supreme judge of the faithful". In the Catholic Church Jesus Christ doesn't amount to anything; the Pope is God, and if you do not believe that then you are lost forever.

In Rome, near the Vatican, is the church of 'Our Lady, the mother of grace.' In its porch is the inscription 'Let us come boldly unto the throne of Mary, that we may obtain mercy.' Not the throne of Christ – the throne of Mary. Christ has been dethroned and Mary has been given his place.

<sup>22</sup>In other words, if you disagree with this doctrine, no matter what you believe in Christ, you are condemned to spend an eternity in Hell. Catholicism teaches that it is not enough to have faith in Christ and to believe on His name; if you do not believe that the Pope is God then you are lost. The Catholic Church freely grants the Pope powers and titles that only God possesses. This is not a minor matter; God will not be dispossessed by anyone.

What were things like in Catholic-controlled countries at this time? This incident is said to have happened in Catholic-controlled Brazil:

"A traveler across Brazil in 1902, who inquired carefully into the subject, found in a thousand miles bishops and priests in plenty, **but not a single copy of the Scriptures in any lay home**; nor had most of the residents ever heard of the Bible, though they were able, willing, and anxious to buy a copy when it was shown to them" (Jacobus, p. 235).

During 1902, public bonfires were made of Bibles in Austria, Fiji, Pernambuco, and Peru. The Archbishop of Sucre in Bolivia suggested that a man who was circulating copies of the Scriptures should be executed for it. The 20<sup>th</sup> century had arrived, and the Catholic Church had not changed her attitude toward the Word of God, although she had lost her power to prevent it from spreading.

## Persecutions During the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

As can be seen, from the year 400 AD to the year 1900 AD the Catholic Church was unwavering in its opposition to the Bible and to those who believed that they were saved "by faith alone". Pope Leo, the very first pope, declared that heretics should be executed, and in 1902 the Catholic Church was still stating that those who distributed Bibles should be killed. In all those years nothing had changed. They had lost their power to murder Protestants and burn Bibles but, as can be seen by the statement of the Archbishop of Sucre in 1902, they had not lost their will – a satanic will that had led to brutal and horrible deaths<sup>23</sup> for tens of millions of people. **No organization in the history of the world has persecuted Christians as long or as severely as the Roman Catholic Church.**<sup>24</sup> All of this stems from their belief that the Pope was God, that they alone were the only true church and the only way of salvation, and that all those who disagreed with them should be converted by force – or else executed.

The Catholic Church has changed her tactics, **but she has changed none of her beliefs**<sup>25</sup>. Today the Catholic Church allows Bible ownership, but it supports the Critical Text – a corrupted version, based on a manuscript taken from the Vatican Library, that is full of errors and does not deserve to be called the Word of God.<sup>26</sup> Catholicism still teaches that the Pope can

<sup>23</sup>The Catholic Church bragged during the Spanish Inquisition that people actually died of fright just at being asked to appear before the Inquisition.

<sup>24</sup>Has the Catholic Church ever apologized for the 50 million people that it brutally murdered? Not as far as I have been able to find. In fact, the Catholic Church has even stated that the Inquisition "wasn't actually that bad". You can read Appendix A and decide this for yourself.

<sup>25</sup>The Vatican II council, held in the 1960's, reaffirmed the Council of Trent and various other Catholic doctrines. What Catholicism believed during the 15 centuries that it slaughtered Christians by the millions is still held as truth today. It still claims to be the one true church of Christ. It still claims to have authority to add its traditions and dogmas to the Word of God. It still claims sole authority to interpret the Word of God. It still claims to have an infallible Pope, who is the head of all churches. It still teaches that there is no salvation apart from the Catholic Church.

<sup>26</sup>I have discussed this in more detail elsewhere. Basically, the Critical Text does not teach that the Bible is the Word of God; it teaches that the Bible has been lost, and that all we can do is guess as to what it really said. It does not teach "Thus saith the Lord"; it teaches "Some manuscripts say this, but we may change our minds if we discover

overrule the Bible by its decrees: when he rules that, say, Mary was sinless, then she is sinless, no matter what the Bible has to say about it. Thus the Bible is subjected to the whims of the Pope.

The Catholic Church teaches that only the Pope can interpret the Bible (a stance it has held since it was founded, and one it has never wavered upon) and believes that the Bible should be interpreted in light of what Catholicism teaches. That is, if the Bible says that all have sinned, but the Pope says that Mary never sinned, then the Bible must mean that all have sinned except for Mary. This is not letting the Bible speak for itself, nor is it comparing all doctrines to the Word of God; this is forcing the Bible to support whatever the Pope wants.

**In 1929 Pope Pius IX and Mussolini signed the Lateran Treaty.** This made the Roman Catholic Church the “sole religion” of Italy; the Italian government also paid to Rome 750 million lire in cash and 1 billion lire in state bonds. **The Roman Catholic Church, in return, used its authority to put Mussolini in power;** it required all Catholics to withdraw from participation in politics (many Catholics had been opposing the fascist Mussolini) and the Pope commanded Catholics to support Mussolini. Italian Catholics did so, allowing Mussolini to be voted into power. The Cardinals in Rome hailed Mussolini as “that eminent statesmen [who rules Italy] by a decree of the Divine Providence.” Both parties benefited: the Catholic Church became the official religion of Italy, and Mussolini's Fascist party assumed political power. With this newfound power, criticism of the Catholic Church became a crime and religious education became mandatory.

**In 1933 the Catholic Church signed a concordant with Hitler.** As a result of this concordant the Catholic Church received hundreds of millions of dollars. In return Pope Pius IX never excommunicated Hitler, who was a Catholic<sup>27</sup>, and never once protested the ongoing slaughter of 6 million Jews. The Catholic Church persuaded German Catholics to back Hitler; without their support it is unlikely that he would have been voted into power. Catholic leaders of the day spoke glowingly of Hitler and the Nazi movement. When Hitler came to power Cardinal Michael Faulhaber sent him this note of congratulations:

“What the old parliaments and parties failed to achieve in sixty years your broad statesman's vision has made a reality of world history in six months. This handclasp with the papacy, the greatest moral force in the history of the world, signifies a mighty deed full of immense blessing and an increase in German prestige East and West, in the sight of the entire world.” (Hasler, *How the Pope Became Infallible*, p. 257)

Pulitzer-prize-winning journalist John Toland said this:

“The Vatican was so appreciative of being recognized as a full partner that it asked God to bless the Reich. On a more practical level, it ordered German bishops to swear allegiance to the National Socialist regime. The new oath concluded with these significant words: 'In the performance of my spiritual office and in my solicitude for the welfare and the interest of the German Reich, I will endeavor to avoid all

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another manuscript” - thus reducing the Bible to a pile of guesswork that cannot be trusted.

<sup>27</sup>It has often been said that Hitler was a Christian. That is not the case; Hitler was a Catholic. He was raised in a traditional Catholic family, regularly attended Mass, served as an altar boy, and attended school as a Benedictine monastery. Even after Hitler came to power he continued to attend Catholic worship services from time to time. Hitler himself insisted that he was a Catholic, and the Pope never disagreed with him.

detrimental acts which might endanger it.'" (Toland, *Adolf Hitler*, pp. 431-32).

The Catholic Church encouraged its members to vote for Hitler (even though at the time they knew who he was and his evil programs had already begun) and Catholics did so overwhelmingly. On Hitler's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday the Catholic Church celebrated him and asked for God's blessing upon him. The Pope even personally congratulated him. When Hitler narrowly escaped assassination in 1939 the Catholic press in Germany almost unanimously declared it to be an act of special protection by God. Cardinal Faulhaber instructed that a special song be sang in Hitler's honor to thank God for his narrow escape. By this time Hitler had already invaded Poland, but rather than condemn him (something that never happened at any point while the Holocaust was going on) they congratulated him on his narrow brush with death. The Pope even encouraged all German Catholics to fight with Hitler!

Besides Hitler, Himmler was also a Catholic; he attended church regularly, took communion, confessed, and prayed. So was SS Colonel Rudolf Hoess, Commandant of Auschwitz. It is important to realize that, far from condemning the horrible atrocities that were going on in Nazi Germany, **the Catholic Church actually helped bring them about**. The Pope did not condemn Hitler; he **encouraged** him and helped him rise to power. The Pope refused to command the Catholics serving in the German army (a quarter of the SS officers were Catholics) to stop helping Hitler, stating that he did not want to give them a crisis of conscience. In fact, after the war, **the Catholic Church aided Nazi war criminals in escaping** from Germany to South America. Far from trying to bring these monsters to justice, the Vatican issued them passports and helped them escape from the Allied forces that were trying to hunt them down. All of this is well-documented.

Why would the Roman Catholic Church side with the Fascists? The Catholic Church sees itself (even today) as the kingdom of God on Earth; it believes that it has the authority to rule over the nations, and it seeks the exercise political power – something that it has only recently lost. At the time it was clear that Communism was no friend of the Catholic Church; its ruthless atheism was a severe threat. Yet, the capitalistic countries of the west were not an ally either; the Catholic Church opposed the freedoms of conscience, religion, and of the press, and the Western democracies (all largely Protestant) held those freedoms dear. The only ally it saw was in Fascism – a group that was seemingly unstoppable at the time, and one that was more than willing to align with the Catholic Church in exchange for support.

## In Conclusion

There is a great deal more I could say – about Catholic doctrine, or Catholic history, or even on the Catholic church today. I believe it to be an evil, satanic organization that has never passed up a chance to persecute Christians. Its power to inflict damage has waned over the years, but its will is just as evil as it has ever been, and its intentions have not wavered.

For those who are interested there are a great many resources available on this topic. Entire books have been written about Catholic heresies, Catholic history through the ages, and on the things that the Catholic Church has done today. Given all that I have learned about the Catholic Church, it is extremely clear to me that it is definitely *not* Christian – in fact, given all

that it is done through the years, I find it impossible to name an organization that has exercised more pure evil over a longer period of time than the Catholic Church of Rome.

## Appendix A: The Spanish Inquisition

[The following description of the tortures of the Catholic inquisition in Germany in the 16th century is from J. Wylie's *History of Protestantism*, Book 15, Chapter 11.]

Turn we now to the town of Nuremberg, in Bavaria. The zeal with which Duke Albert, the sovereign of Bavaria, entered into the restoration of Roman Catholicism, we have already narrated. To further the movement, he provided every one of the chief towns of his dominions with a Holy Office, and the Inquisition of Nuremberg still remains an anomalous and horrible monument in the midst of a city where the memorials of an exquisite art, and the creations of an unrivalled genius, meet one at every step. We shall first describe the Chamber of Torture.

The house so called immediately adjoins the Imperial Castle, which from its lofty site looks down on the city, whose Gothic towers, sculptured fronts, and curiously ornamented gables are seen covering both banks of the Pegnitz, which rolls below. The house may have been the guard-room of the castle. It derives its name, the Torture-chamber, not from the fact that the torture was here inflicted, but because into this one chamber has been collected a complete set of the instruments of torture gleaned from the various Inquisitions that formerly existed in Bavaria. A glance suffices to show the whole dreadful apparatus by which the adherents of Rome sought to maintain her dogmas. Placed next to the door, and greeting the sight as one enters, is a collection of hideous masks. These represent creatures monstrous of shape, and malignant and fiendish of nature, It is in beholding them that we begin to perceive how subtle was the genius that devised this system of coercion, and that it took the mind as well as the body of the victim into account. In gazing on them, one feels as if he had suddenly come into polluting and debasing society, and had sunk to the same moral level with the creatures here figured before him. He suffers a conscious abatement of dignity and fortitude. The persecutor had calculated, doubtless, that the effect produced upon the mind of his victim by these dreadful apparitions, would be that he would become morally relaxed, and less able to sustain his cause. Unless of strong mind, indeed, the unfortunate prisoner, on entering such a place, and seeing himself encompassed with such unearthly and hideous shapes, must have felt as if he were the vile heretic which the persecutor styled him, and as if already the infernal den had opened its portals, and sent forth its venomous swarms to bid him welcome. Yourself accursed, with accursed beings are you henceforth to dwell—such was the silent language of these abhorred images.

We pass on into the chamber, where more dreadful sights meet our gaze. It is hung round and round with instruments of torture, so numerous that it would take a long while even to name them, and so diverse that it would take a much longer time to describe them. We must take them in groups, for it were hopeless to think of going over them one by one, and particularising the mode in which each operated, and the ingenuity and art with which all of them have been adapted to their horrible end. There were instruments for compressing the fingers till the bones should be squeezed to splinters. There were instruments for probing below the finger-nails till an exquisite pain, like a burning fire, would run along the nerves. There were instruments for tearing out the tongue, for scooping out the eyes, for grubbing-up the ears. There were bunches of iron cords, with a spiked circle at the end of every whip, for tearing the flesh from the back till bone and sinew were laid bare. There were iron cases for the legs, which were tightened upon the

limb placed in them by means of a screw, till flesh and bone were reduced to a jelly. There were cradles set full of sharp spikes, in which victims were laid and rolled from side to side, the wretched occupant being pierced at each movement of the machine with innumerable sharp points. There were iron ladles with long handles, for holding molten lead or boiling pitch, to be poured down the throat of the victim, and convert his body into a burning cauldron. There were frames with holes to admit the hands and feet, so contrived that the person put into them had his body bent into unnatural and painful positions, and the agony grew greater and greater by moments, and yet the man did not die. There were chestfuls of small but most ingeniously constructed instruments for pinching, probing, or tearing the more sensitive parts of the body, and continuing the pain up to the very verge where reason or life gives way. On the floor and walls of the apartment were other and larger instruments for the same fearful end—lacerating, mangling, and agonizing living men; but these we shall meet in other dungeons we are yet to visit.

The first impression on entering the chamber was one of bewildering horror; a confused procession of mangled, mutilated, agonising men, speechless in their great woe, the flesh peeled from off their livid sinews, the sockets where eyes had been, hollow and empty, seemed to pass before one. The most dreadful scenes which the great genius of Dante has imagined, appeared tame in comparison with the spectral groups which this chamber summoned up. The first impulse was to escape, lest images of pain, memories of tormented men, who were made to die a hundred deaths in one, should take hold of one's mind, never again to be effaced from it.

The things we have been surveying are not the mere models of the instruments made use of in the Holy Office; they are the veritable instruments themselves. We see before us the actual implements by which hundreds and thousands of men and women, many of them saints and confessors of the Lord Jesus, were torn, and mangled, and slain. These terrible realities the men of the sixteenth century had to face and endure, or renounce the hope of the life eternal. Painful they were to flesh and blood —nay, not even endurable by flesh and blood unless sustained by the Spirit of the mighty God.

We leave the Torture-chamber to visit the Inquisition proper. We go eastward, about half a mile, keeping close to the northern wall of the city, till we come to an old tower, styled in the common parlance of Nuremberg the Max Tower. We pull the bell, the iron handle and chain of which are seen suspended beside the door-post. The cicerone appears, carrying a bunch of keys, a lantern, and some half-dozen candles. The lantern is to show us our way, and the candles are for the purpose of being lighted and stuck up at the turnings in the dark underground passages which we are about to traverse. Should mischance befall our lantern, these tapers, like beacon-lights in a narrow creek, will pilot us safely back into the day. The cicerone, selecting the largest from the bunch of keys, inserts it in the lock of the massy portal before which we stand, bolt after bolt is turned, and the door, with hoarse heavy groan as it turns on its hinge, opens slowly to us. We begin to descend. We go down one flight of steps; we go down a second flight; we descend yet a third. And now we pause a moment. The darkness is intense, for here never came the faintest glimmer of day; but a gleam thrown forward from the lantern showed us that we were arrived at the entrance of a horizontal, narrow passage. We could see, by the flickering of the light upon its sides and roof, that the corridor we were traversing was hewn out of the rock. We had gone only a few paces when we were brought up before a massy door. As far as the dim light served us, we could see the door, old, powdery with dust, and partly worm-eaten.

Passing in, the corridor continued, and we went forward other three paces or so, when we found ourselves before a second door. We opened and shut it behind us as we did the first. Again we began to thread our way: a third door stopped us. We opened and closed it in like manner. Every step was carrying us deeper into the heart of the rock, and multiplying the barriers between us and the upper world. We were shut in with the thick darkness and the awful silence. We began to realize what must have been the feelings of some unhappy disciple of the Gospel, surprised by the familiars of the Holy Office, led through the midnight streets of Nuremberg, conducted to Max Tower, led down flight after flight of stairs, and along this horizontal shaft in the rock, and at every few paces a massy door, with its locks and bolts, closing behind him! He must have felt how utterly he was beyond the reach of human pity and human aid. No cry, however piercing, could reach the ear of man through these roofs of rock.

He was entirely in the power of those who had brought him thither. At last we came to a side-door in the narrow passage. We halted, applied the key, and the door, with its ancient mould, creaking harshly as if moving on a hinge long disused, opened to let us in. We found ourselves in a rather roomy chamber, it might be about twelve feet square. This was the Chamber of Question. Along one side of the apartment ran a low platform. There sat of old the inquisitors, three in number—the first a divine, the second a casuist, and the third a civilian. The only occupant of that platform was the crucifix, or image of the Savior on the cross, which still remained. The six candles that usually burned before the "holy Fathers" were, of course, extinguished, but our lantern supplied their place, and showed us the grim furnishings of the apartment. In the middle was the horizontal rack or bed of torture, on which the victim was stretched till bone started from bone, and his dislocated frame became the seat of agony, which was suspended only when it had reached a pitch that threatened death.

Leaning against the wall of the chamber was the upright rack, which is simpler, but as an instrument of torture not less effectual, than the horizontal one. There was the iron chain which wound over a pulley, and hauled up the victim to the vaulted roof; and there were the two great stone weights which, tied to his feet, and the iron cord let go, brought him down with a jerk that dislocated his limbs, while the spiky rollers, which he grazed in his descent, cut into and excoriated his back, leaving his body a bloody, dislocated mass.

Here, too, was the cradle of which we have made mention above, amply garnished within with cruel knobs, on which the sufferer, tied hand and foot, was thrown at every movement of the machine, to be bruised all over, and brought forth discoloured, swollen, bleeding, but still living. All round, ready to hand, were hung the minor instruments of torture. There were screws and thumbkins for the fingers, spiked collars for the neck, iron boots for the legs, gags for the mouth, cloths to cover the face, and permit the slow percolation of water, drop by drop, down the throat of the person undergoing this form of torture. There were rollers set round with spikes, for bruising the arms and back; there were iron scourges, pincers, and tongs for tearing out the tongue, slitting the nose and ears, and otherwise disfiguring and mangling the body till it was horrible and horrifying to look upon it. There were other things of which an expert only could tell the name and the use. Had these instruments a tongue, and could the history of this chamber be written, how awful the tale!

We shall suppose that all this has been gone through; that the confessor has been stretched on the bed of torture; has been gashed, broken, mangled, and yet, by power given him from above, has not denied his Savior: he has been "tortured not accepting deliverance:" what further punishment

has the Holy Office in reserve for those from whom its torments have failed to extort a recantation? These dreadful dungeons furnish us with the means of answering this question.

We return to the narrow passage, and go forward a little way. Every few paces there comes a door, originally strong and massy, and garnished with great iron knobs but now old and mouldy, and creaking when opened with a noise painfully loud in the deep stillness. The windings are numerous, but at every turning of the passage a lighted candle is placed, lest peradventure the way should be missed, and the road back to the living world be lost for ever. A few steps are taken downwards, very cautiously, for a lantern can barely show the ground. Here there is a vaulted chamber, entirely dug out of the living rock, except the roof, which is formed of hewn stone. It contains an iron image of the Virgin; and on the opposite wall, suspended by an iron hook, is a lamp, which when lighted shows the goodly proportions of "Our Lady." On the instant of touching a spring the image flings open its arms, which resemble the doors of a cupboard, and which are seen to be stuck full on the inside with poignards, each about a foot in length. Some of these knives are so placed as to enter the eyes of those whom the image enfolded in its embrace, others are set so as to penetrate the ears and brain, others to pierce the breast, and others again to gore the abdomen.

The person who had passed through the terrible ordeal of the Question-chamber, but had made no recantation, would be led along the tortuous passage by which we had come, and ushered into this vault, where the first object that would greet his eye, the pale light of the lamp falling on it, would be the iron Virgin. He would be bidden to stand right in front of the image. The spring would be touched by the executioner ÷ the Virgin would fling open her arms, and the wretched victim would straightway be forced within them. Another spring was then touched ÷ the Virgin closed upon her victim; a strong wooden beam, fastened at one end to the wall by a movable joint, the other placed against the doors of the iron image, was worked by a screw, and as the beam was pushed out, the spiky arms of the Virgin slowly but irresistibly closed upon the man, cruelly goring him. When the dreadful business was ended, it needed not that the executioner should put himself to the trouble of making the Virgin unclasp the mangled carcass of her victim; provision had been made for its quick and secret disposal. At the touching of a third spring, the floor of the image would slide aside, and the body of the victim drop down the mouth of a perpendicular shaft in the rock. We look down this pit, and can see, at a great depth, the shimmer of water. A canal had been made to flow underneath the vault where stood the iron Virgin, and when she had done her work upon those who were delivered over to her tender mercies, she let them fall, with quick descent and sullen plunge, into the canal underneath, where they were floated to the Pegnitz, and from the Pegnitz to the Rhine, and by the Rhine to the ocean, there to sleep beside the dust of Huss and Jerome.