



CATHOLICISM

VS.

The Bible

CONFLICT & CONTROVERSY

by Robert D. Hope

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vs.
The Bible
Conflict and Controversy

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Foreword

The lessons and purpose in this workbook are designed to help us understand our responsibility in knowing what the Bible says in its proper context. Every person is charged with this obligation that we may discern truth and error.

*Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved,
a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who
correctly handles the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)*

May our faith and diligence be reflected in our actions, our thoughts, our speech, and in our life.

Dedication

With thanks to Bonnie—a loving wife, a wonderful friend, and a dedicated mother.

Who has from the beginning of our journey together shared the gospel of Christ with me and has always been my strength. As a result of her efforts and the influence of the Gospel, I was baptized into Christ and now am a member of the Church of Christ. I hope to continue to serve Him, in the Lord's church for many years to come.

Acknowledgment

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Table of Contents

Introduction	7
1 The Catholic Church Claims It Is the Only True Church	9
2 An Apostasy Prophesied	13
3 Why Are the Priests Called Father?	15
4 The Bible Needs an Official Teacher	17
5 The Apostles Gave Power to Other Bishops and Priests	19
6 Why Priests Do Not Marry	20
7 Peter's Authority Handed Down	22
8 The Powers of the Pope	24
9 Virgin Mary	28
10 Clerical Dress and Celibacy	31
11 Bishops and Pastors	34
12 Blessed Articles: Prayers and Ten Commandments	35
13 Confession to the Priests	39
14 Purgatory	41
15 Sexual Abuse and Homosexuality	44
16 The Catholic Church Officially Teaches the Method of Baptism	48
17 Baptism: Immersion vs. Pouring	50
18 Baptism Without a Priest	53
19 Unbaptized Babies	55
20 Catholic Terms, Organizations, Garb, Not Found in the Bible	58

Introduction

Religion undoubtedly plays an important part in the lives of people all around the world. Many people would say religion is “the most important part” of their lives and participate in the practices of their faith as a means of deepening their commitment to their Creator.

Many Christians are intimidated by the idea of sharing their faith. Jesus never intended for the Great Commission to be an impossible burden. God meant for us to be witnesses of Jesus Christ through the life that we lead and example that we exhibit.

Early on in my childhood, my family and I never questioned our belief in the tradition of Catholicism as being a part of our lives. I do have to admit, it was confusing and sometimes humorous as to what we were having for dinner on Friday nights. Sometimes it was fish, in keeping with Catholic Doctrine and sometimes hamburgers were on the menu. I can remember so vividly, trying to sit through services being completely bored and listening to someone who was speaking in a language (Latin) I didn’t even understand, and it seemed like no one else understood him either.

I can still recall a heart wrenching experience that took place one afternoon in Catechism class as all the students were sitting on the floor in a half circle. There was a large panel standing vertically in front of us with a sheet draped over it. As the priest stood before us, he asked if anyone loved the devil. We all looked at each other too scared to raise our hands except one boy. The priest called him up front, stood him on a folding chair, and removed the draped cloth in which a life size picture of the devil stood with pitchfork in hand in flaming fire. He then told the boy since you love the devil, kiss the devil’s picture. Needless to say, all of us students were in tears and absolutely frightened by what just took place.

As I grew older, I began to have questions about what I was being taught, more importantly I wondered why the adults never questioned anything or really knew what the Bible taught in the first

place. Then in 1967 I met a girl in high school who would become my friend and wife for a lifetime! She was of a different faith, and it didn't seem to matter to the both of us. But it was because of this relationship that my life took an abrupt turn. As she shared the gospel with me along with the compassion of her mom and dad, I came to realize that the spiritual concerns and confusion in my life were now answered by the simplicity of the gospel of Christ, and I developed a new sense of direction and hope.

It is through the gospel of Christ that all things are weighed, sifted, and tested. It is the only standard in which all things will be judged. It is through God's Word that we become spiritually educated and accountable for our responsibilities in both learning and sharing the gospel. In 2 Timothy 2:15 the Bible encourages us to study and know the Scriptures. After being made aware of this duty, I began my journey in finding answers to questions that I had growing up and as an adult.

This workbook was written in the hope that it may answer some of your questions and concerns, putting things in their proper perspective from a biblical point of view. This workbook was not written to slander anyone, nor was it written in an attitude of malice. Instead, I simply set out to compare Catholic doctrine with what is taught in the Bible. Please read with an open mind. In some cases, Scriptures were used from the Holy Bible RSV (2nd Catholic edition) which reads the same as other translations of the Bible, but itself refutes the contradiction of the doctrine of Catholicism.

I hope that those of you who utilize this workbook will grow in Bible knowledge, clarity, and confidence in the Scriptures. It's through biblical continuity that faith and confidence is established, and where there is faith and confidence, we develop a healthy spiritual foundation. I have great expectations that souls will be enlightened and saved, as others have, as they come to a better awareness and understanding of Bible truths. As a result, we may enjoy the wonderful blessings God has provided for us. If one soul is strengthened or saved because of this study, our time has been well spent.

Chapter 1

The Catholic Church Claims It Is the Only True Church

Catholic Position

Christ definitely set up a Church. This is in the Bible. He made one Church, not many churches. Christ said, “my church” not “my churches.” To find the teachings, the authority, and the grace of Jesus Christ you must find *his church*, the one He founded, the one that was to last “. . . even to the consummation of the world;” the one against which “. . . the gates of hell shall not prevail.” (Matthew 16:18)

Which then is the church recorded in the Bible?

The only Church that could possibly be the Church that Our Lord started is a Church 1900 years old. How can you find out which church is 1900 years old? Consult a history professor in any college; go to a library and look at a history book or an encyclopedia. The fact that the Catholic Church is 1900 years old is simple history admitted by all historians. The Catholic Church is the ancient Church, the one Christ set up. The Catholic Church, 1900 years old, is the only Church which has authority from Christ to teach us, to give God’s grace to us, and to govern us.

Catholicism teaches that the Pope is the earthly head of the church. “The Pope”, who is the Bishop of Rome and the Vicar of Christ on earth is the visible head of the whole Catholic Church. Who was the first Pope? St. Peter, who was made Pope by Jesus Christ Himself ... Did Peter’s authority die with him? No, it was handed down to a man named Linus, and after he died, it was handed down to Cletus, and so forth, thus the supreme authority in religion has been handed down through the history of Christianity; there has always been a Pope.

The Powers of the Pope

The Pope is the real representative of Christ on this earth. He is the highest teaching authority in religion. When he teaches in his official capacity as head of God's Church a doctrine of faith or morality, he cannot make a mistake because he is guided by the Holy Ghost.

The Pope is the highest ruling authority in religion. He has the "keys of the kingdom of heaven." All must obey him in matters of religion.

The Pope has supreme authority over Christ's Sacraments and other means of grace, that the Church possesses.¹

Bible Position

A. Peter's exaltation is established in error in Catholic Doctrine by not examining the entire context of the Scriptures (Matthew 16:13–18) concerning Jesus as the builder of the church.

The "Rock" on which Jesus built His church is not Peter; it is the truth, Peter's confession, that Jesus is the Son of God (Matthew 16:13–17).

In this context, Jesus is not confessing and exalting Peter; rather, Peter is confessing and exalting Jesus! The "Rock" on which the church is built (Greek *petra*) is a solid edge, cliff, mass of stone. It is not the same as Peter (Greek *Petros*, a stone, a fragment) but is contrasted to him.

¹ Farrell, Martin W. *Instructions for non-Catholics by Parish Priests*. Chicago, Illinois: United Book Service, 1954, L. 18 & 19, pp. 54–56, 60.

Catholic Doctrine Only Considers Matthew 16:18²

- B. Consider reading the entire context of Matthew 16:13–18, which confirms Christ as the builder of the church.
- C. Below are other supporting Scriptures which confirm that Jesus is the foundation and the head of the church.

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 3:11)

Note: This passage doesn't teach that Peter was given any more authority than the rest of the apostles as Catholics claim.

And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way. (Ephesians 1:22–23)

And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. (Colossians 1:18)

Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. (Ephesians 5:22–23)

built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. (Ephesians 2:20)

Conclusion

According to the Catholic Church, God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, without the Catholic Clergy are all helpless and unable to make known to man God's will. The Bible needs an official teacher and interpreter appointed by Almighty God, who is the author of the

2 *Ibid.*, L. 18, p. 54.

Bible. God has given us such a teacher and interpreter of the Bible—
The Catholic Church.³

This is false based on the Scriptures cited above, giving Christ supremacy over all things for the church. All power was given into His hands when he was raised from the dead (Matthew 28:18; 20). He is the rightful ruler of all. He was exalted to be ruler of all things and made the Head of the church; not merely its ruler, but the Head of the body, which derives its life from the Head.

Christ is not only the head over the church; He is the head over everything. There is no evidence of the term or title of “Pope” documented in Scripture, only Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and the head of the Church.

3 Farrell, L. 3, pp. 10–11.