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BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS AMONG CATHOLICS

by

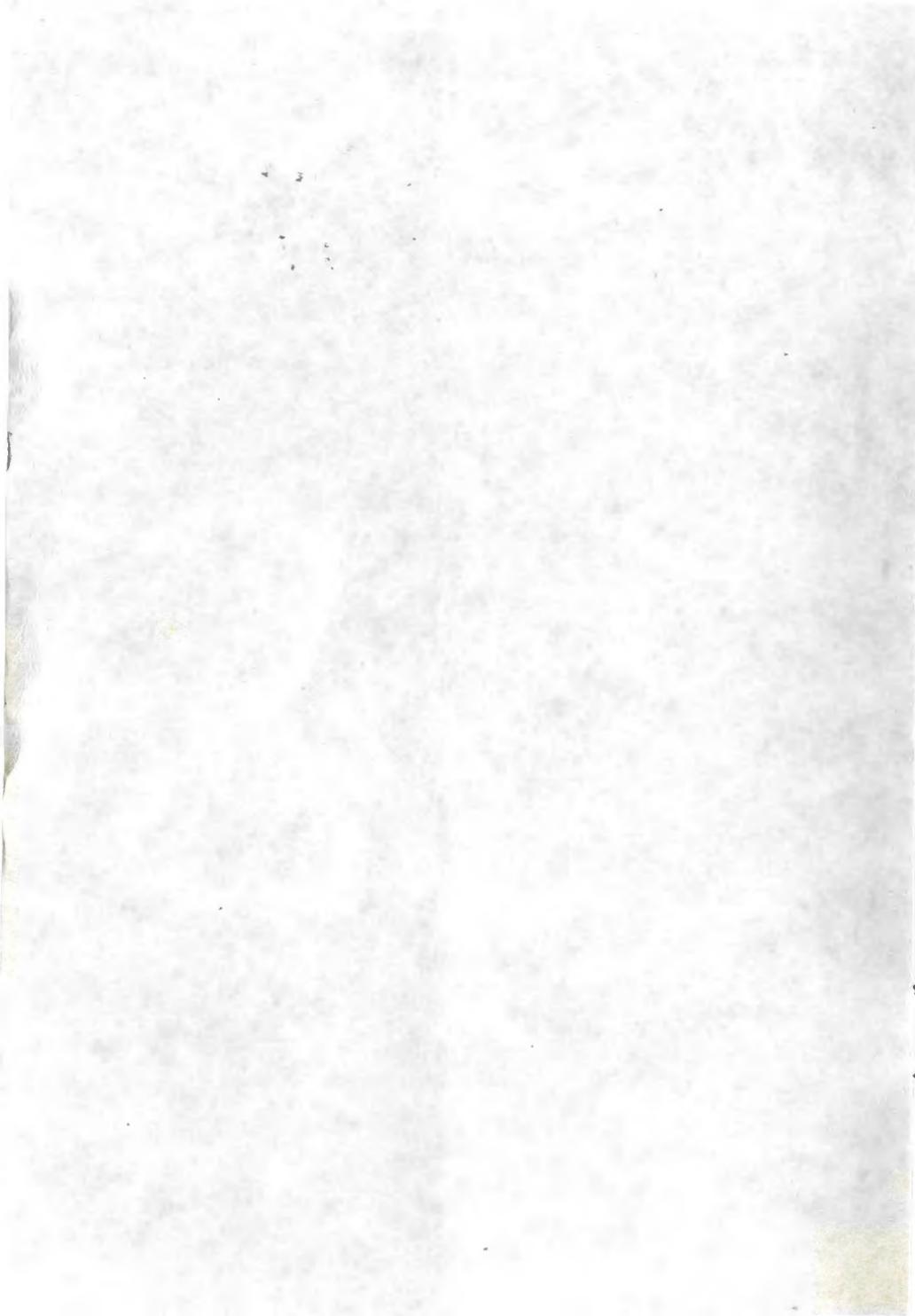
Howard Horton

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Breaking Down Barriers Among Catholics

Howard Horton

Perhaps the greatest challenge facing the church of the future is the rising power of Roman Catholicism, which is girded for a show-down bid for control of world politics and religion. Not since the dark ages has the church of Rome been so powerfully organized for decisive action. The present zeal of American Catholicism indicates that the time has come when Rome thinks she is powerful enough to launch an all-out bid for control of our nation. Recognition of the plans and strategy of the Roman hierarchy spotlights the necessity of learning how to meet and refute every essential principle of Roman Catholicism.

The importance of such preparation is further impressed by the great mass of professing Roman Catholics who are potentially active agents in the campaign. No other single party, religious or political, can claim so many members as the Catholic church. It behooves every Christian to make a study of the doctrines and dogmas of Catholicism in order to be able to meet the powerful propaganda drives and doctrinal campaigns which are certain to come.

More important than either of the former considerations is the fact that so great a mass of humanity has been led into error and is consequently lost. When we view the zeal and conviction of our Catholic neighbors and the evidences of their sincerity and devotion, our hearts should be filled with the desire to know how to reach them for Christ. Too long we have looked upon them as untouchables. We send missionaries and spend thousands of dollars (which is not one-tenth enough) in Africa seeking to lead the natives from superstition, and right in our own nation millions of our neighbors are blindly superstitious, trusting in their relics, candles, rosaries, crucifixes, etc. Other missionaries and more thousands of dollars (far too little) are sent to convert the ancestor worshipers of Japan while millions of our own citizens worship so-called "saints" who have been dead for ages. Great plans are under way to carry the gospel to the people of Germany, who were blinded by evil leaders (and those plans are right!); shall we neglect our own Catholic neighbors who are blindly following their leaders in error? While we labor to reach the idol worshipers of China and India, let us awaken to the millions of our own nation who bow themselves before statues and images thinking they

honor Christ. Who knows but that we may find that cultivation of the soil of Catholicism may produce an abundantly fruitful harvest? We have never tried.

The first essential in breaking down barriers among Catholics is a thorough and exact knowledge of Catholic teaching and a knowledge of the Bible as it relates to these cardinal errors. Too much emphasis cannot be placed upon the importance of getting accurate information from authorized Catholic sources. All Catholics are drilled in this motto: "If it's anything Catholic, ask a Catholic." Therefore, be sure your information about Catholic doctrine is exactly as Catholics teach it. Catholics do not teach many things which are attributed to them. Other things which they do teach are not taught in the way that many Protestants have claimed. You cannot convert a Catholic by misrepresenting his doctrine. Learn the error of what they teach in the exact sense that they teach it. Acquaint yourself with the peculiar "twists" of reasoning by which the chief doctrines are justified. Good sources of information are Gibbon's **"The Faith of Our Fathers,"*** O'Brien's **"The Faith of Millions"***** and Karl Adam's **"The Spirit of Catholicism."*****

Another essential fact to learn about Catholicism is that it may vary from nation to nation in certain points of emphasis. For example, Catholicism in Latin America and Spain differs greatly from American Catholicism in its attitude toward non-Catholic bodies. Even within our nation Catholicism varies from section to section in its general spirit. In the Southern states, where Catholicism is comparatively weak, many distinctive traits of the Roman church are held in the background while other more appealing characteristics are magnified. However, in our large eastern cities, where the Catholic church dominates the religious field, you can see a display of Catholicism in its fullness. Her arrogance and casuistry is evident on every hand. We must become thoroughly acquainted with the over-all system of Catholicism and be able to see through the shallow whitewash of purely national or sectional adjustments.

Understanding the Catholic Mind

Any intelligent approach to Catholicism must seek an understanding of the Catholic mind, its spirit and attitudes. The mass-mind of Catholicism is the product of centuries, and it is difficult for one not reared in Catholic influence to realize how completely the individual mind is subjected to that of the mass. Every effort of the church and her parochial schools is directed toward the cultivation of this mass

thinking — catechisms must be memorized and recited verbatim, and all subjects are taught with an eye to excluding independent thought. Under threats of eternal punishment they are forbidden to hear non-Catholic teaching. Consequently, the average Catholic is robbed of his power to think independently in matters of religion. Like a machine he is set to reject automatically without any thought everything that is not Catholic, and to accept everything that is Catholic, however contradictory. To him reverence is measurable in relation to one's blind and unquestioning acceptance of everything taught by the church.

The failure to recognize this mass-mind of Catholicism has led to much frustrated effort and impatience at their obstinate refusal to consider anything non-Catholic. We are prone to forget that a Catholic can no more help refusing such teaching than a machine can refuse to respond to the proper manipulation of its mechanism. A body which has been sickened by poison food cannot help refusing to retain good food. Catholics will never be converted until we have learned to pierce their mass-mind and fan to flame the dead embers of independent, individual thought.

There are a number of definite barriers between Catholics and the gospel. While these barriers are definite and difficult obstacles, they are the doors through which we must enter with the truth. Thus the very thing that is an insurmountable barrier while blindly accepted becomes the wedge to destroy the entire fortress when studied independently. In this chapter it will be impossible to do more than introduce the difficulties and point the direction for individual study and preparation. Don't expect to crush Catholicism at one blow. No one tactic will be equally useful in every case. Search until you find a point that bothers your prospect — a weakness in his defense — and then refuse to leave it — teach, urge, persuade until he breaks.

Specific Barriers

1. **Church Unity:** Of all the weapons in the armory of Catholicism the most powerful one is its unequivocal stand for unity. The denominations are helpless at the hands of an informed Catholic, because Catholicism is as right as God in her contention that the church must be one. Karl Adam, in his book **The Spirit of Catholicism** (Macmillan, 1943)*** clearly states the Catholic position as follows: "True there is only one Church of Christ. She alone is the Body of Christ and without her there is no salvation." (p. 201.) Again, "The Church would belie her own deepest essence and her outstanding quality,—

if she were ever to recognize some collateral and antagonistic Christian church as her sister and as possessing equal rights with herself." (p. 183.) "So there is no doubt about this matter. There is only one answer to the question whether other Christian communions have not also a vocation and a power to save men, and the Church is quite intolerant about it. — The Church cannot but anathematize them, and she will continue to do so until the Lord comes.— If we believe that Christ is the only name in heaven and on earth whereby we may be saved, we must believe also that true salvation is to be found only in the one Church which He founded. The one Christ and the one Body are indissolubly together." (pp. 187, 188.)

An apostle could not have stated the truth more clearly. If every doctrine of the Roman Catholic church were as faultless as this, no force on earth could withstand her onslaught, and this chapter would never have been written. Protestantism forfeited her battle with Catholicism when she took up arms to defend religious divisions, and it will be a sad day for the Lord's church if her members forsake their conviction in, and their willingness to contend for the oneness of the Lord's body.

The Catholic mind rests securely upon its doctrine of unity. The divisions of Protestantism offer no appeal to the Catholic. He will not forfeit unity for confusion. However, by admitting the rightness of this teaching and contending for it with as much conviction as the Catholic does you can neutralize his strongest fortification and force him to retreat from the only major position he can uphold by God's Word. By this admission you place him on the defensive from the start. To justify his security he must seek reasons for feeling that he is a member of the one church. He may thus be led to an independent study, but most likely he will fall back upon the "mass-mind" for consolation and strength.

2. Church Foundation: Everyone is agreed that the foundation is a key to the identification of the one true church. Without hesitation the informed Catholic affirms that the foundation of the church is Peter, and that no church which does not have Peter as its foundation can be the church of Christ. This barrier between Catholics and the truth may prove to be the door by which you can enter some individual's heart if you are prepared.

A footnote on Matt. 16:18 in the Catholic New Testament briefly states the Catholic doctrine: "Compared to an edifice, (the church) is said to rest on a rock as did the house of the wise man of 7:24. The rock was Peter." Karl Adam enlarges upon this theme as follows:

"Faith in Christ, the Church and Peter: these three belong together. Where there is no Peter, where men have broken faith with him, there the fellowship of the faith perishes and along with it belief in Jesus Christ. Where there is no rock, there is no Church, there is no Christ." (**The Spirit of Catholicism**, p. 107.)***

It is now evident that you cannot convert a Catholic until you have shown him that Peter is not the foundation of the church. You can find many excellent arguments which I have not space to enumerate here, but it is well to anchor your efforts on 1 Cor. 3:11, which declares that Christ is the only foundation. Around that premise you can build an impregnable case. The foundation of Matt. 16:18 cannot be Peter, since the word for the foundation is feminine (**petra**), and the word for Peter is masculine (**Petros**). Beyond a doubt the truth that Peter confessed ("Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God") is the foundation upon which the church is founded. Study Matt. 16:16-18 using that confession as the antecedent of the entire declaration of Christ. Peter confessed it; God revealed it; Christ built His church upon it; the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I suggest this for whatever it is worth; I believe it is the truth; I know Catholics cannot meet it.

3. Church Catholicity: It may be that your Catholic friend will appeal to the universality of the Catholic church as reason for belonging to it. Recently I have heard of a young man who became a Catholic while in the army because "it is everywhere." The Catholic mind rests securely in this thought, "If the Catholic church is not right, why is it the only church found in every nation on earth?" You might be greatly surprised at the number of persons who make this one of their chief bulwarks of faith, and also the tremendous weight that it bears with many Protestants. If you expect to convert Catholics, you must be ready to show the futility of this confidence.

I must leave this point also with only a suggestion. True Catholicity is taught by the Bible. The Lord's church is for all nations and all races, but the fact that an organization is universally distributed does not prove it to be the church of Christ. On that ground, Freemasonry would have about as good a claim as Catholicism, since it, too, is an international organization. The "Beast" (Rev. 13:7) was given authority over "every tribe and people and tongue and nation." Does that prove the Beast to be the true church? The church of Christ was "catholic" because it was for all nations alike. It was just as catholic when the congregation in Jerusalem was the only one on earth as when the gospel had been preached to "every creature under

heaven." (Col. 1:23.) The church of Christ is to be identified by its identity with the New Testament rather than by the number of its members and the extent of its boundaries. However, it should be a source of extreme embarrassment to every member of the church that the "apostasy" can boast so much greater effectiveness for its zeal and endeavor. While we fiddle Rome grabs control of the world.

4. **Church Succession:** An unfailling source of confidence to every Catholic is the long and impressive history of their church. "How can any other be right, when she only can trace her history through all ages back to the apostles?" This is made one of the pillars of Catholic conviction. Depending upon Matthew's record of the Great Commission they affirm that one mark of the true church is that it shall have continued without a lapse since the beginning on the day of Pentecost. Jesus said to His apostles, "And behold, I am with you **all days**, even to the consummation of the world." (The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine Edition.) This, it is affirmed, indicates that the church was to have an unbroken chain of visible existence.

It is entirely true that Roman Catholicism can trace its beginning directly to the days of the apostles. Paul was among the first to tell of her beginning. (2 Thess. 2:3-8; 1 Tim. 4:1-3.) However, the gulf between the church of Christ and the apostasy has grown wider at each successive step until today there is little resemblance between the Roman church and the New Testament church. Nothing is gained if Catholicism can prove that it evolved directly from the true church unless she can also prove herself identical with that church.

Catholic authorities are fully aware of this difficulty and usually claim identity as well as succession. Cardinal Gibbons affirmed, "Her creed is now identical with what it was in past ages." (**Faith of Our Fathers**, p. 11.)* In his debate with Alexander Campbell (p. 30) Bishop Purcell read the following quotation from Fletcher: "It is the essence of true religion to remain unchanged; and to have descended, and to descend always, down the stream of time, without corruption or alteration. If, therefore, I undertake distinctly to prove, that the Catholic religion of the present period is indeed, the true religion, then should I also distinctly prove that it has never undergone any alteration, and that it is the same, which revealed originally to mankind, has, during the course of eighteen centuries, formed always the object of the veneration of the orthodox believer."

It becomes the task of every Roman Catholic to prove that the Roman Church has "never undergone any alteration." When your Catholic friend has conceded this point, be ready to point out the be-

ginning of the use of the holy water, penance, Latin mass, extreme unction, purgatory, instrumental music, transubstantiation, celibacy, indulgencies, auricular confession, sprinkling, papal infallibility, etc. Refuse to be sidetracked. Demand proof that these things are practiced now in exactly the way they were, **if at all**, in the beginning of the church. Succession without identity is a meaningless bubble. It may be that at this point you can break through the Catholic "mass thinking" and stir individual thought and study. If so, the grandiose dream of succession ceases to be a barrier and becomes a door of entrance for the truth.

5. **The Papacy:** Inseparably connected with the idea of church succession is the notion of papal succession and supremacy. According to the Douay catechism a pope is one of the essential parts of the church. Cardinal Gibbons (**The Faith of Our Fathers**)* assigns the following reasons for this contention: (1) "As the church is a visible body, it must have a visible head." (p. 6.) (2) "The church is called a kingdom. . . . In Christ's spiritual kingdom, there must be one chief to whom all owe spiritual allegiance. . . . (pp. 6, 7.) (3) "So did our Lord intend that all the sheep of His fold should . . . listen to the voice of one Chief Pastor." (p. 7.) (4) "His church is compared to a human body. . . . Even so our Lord ordained that His Church . . . should be united to one supreme visible head, whom they are bound to obey." (p. 7.)

No one of these specifications can be claimed by a man without usurping an honor positively attributed to Christ. In all of Cardinal Gibbons' reasons he **assumes** the necessity for a **visible** head. The Scriptures teach that the church is a spiritual body with Christ its only spiritual head (Eph. 1:22, 23; Col. 1:18); as a spiritual kingdom, the church has Christ only as its spiritual King (Acts 2:36; 1 Pet. 3:21; Jas. 4:12); as a sheepfold the church has only one "Chief Shepherd." (John 10:11, 16; 1 Pet. 5:4.)

The gradual development of the papacy brands it as a false system. Cardinal Gibbons lays down this principle: "No dogma, unknown to the apostles, not contained in the primitive Christian revelation can be admitted. For the apostles received the whole deposit of God's word, according to the promise of our Lord. . . ." The following table shows that every essential characteristic of the papacy originated since the days of the apostles.

- (1) Jesus forbade the use of the term "pope" (father) in a religious sense. (Matt. 23:9.)

- (2) It first began to be applied to all teachers, then limited to bishops and abbots.
- (3) Later it was limited to the bishop of Rome and the patriarchs of Antioch, Alexandria, Jerusalem and Constantinople.
- (4) First formally adopted by Sorcius (Bishop of Rome, 384-398); officially used since Leo I (440-461); declared exclusive title of the papacy by Gregory VII. (1073-1085.)
- (5) Termed Vicar of St. Peter by Boniface (722); and "Vicar of Jesus Christ" by Innocent III. (1198-1216.)
- (6) Papal infallibility finally recognized by an Oecumenical council in 1870 under Pius IX. (Schaff and Herzog, **Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge**, Vol. 3, p. 1869; Vol. 1, p. 561.)

6. **The Bible:** One of the greatest barriers in the path of a Catholic is the question of the authority of the Bible. The first difficulty arising in this respect is the difference between Catholic and Protestant versions. Catholics are drilled in the idea that the Protestant Bible is without any authority for two reasons: (1) It does not contain the Apocrypha, which is included in the Catholic versions; (2) It is a mis-translation.

The Apocryphal books were not officially declared to be a part of the Roman Catholic Bible until 1545 by the Council of Trent. They were written before Christ and have nothing to do with Christianity, even if they have proper authority. They were adopted from the Septuagint, but are not found in the Hebrew. Even the Catholics do not claim them as a part of the New Testament. The very meaning of the word "Apocrypha" casts doubt upon these books: "Writings or statements of doubtful authorship, or authority." The adjective form, "apocryphal," is defined as "not canonical," "unauthentic," "spurious," and "fabulous" is given as a synonym.

As to the differences between the versions, there are scarcely any more differences between the Roman Catholic versions and the King James version than between the King James and the American Standard versions. In many particular passages I personally prefer the new Catholic translation to either of the above mentioned "Protestant" versions. Insist that the versions be compared.

In the second place, Catholics are taught that all versions of the Bible are utterly unintelligible unless interpreted by a priest. All Catholics — educated and intelligent as well as the ignorant and unlearned — look blindly to the priests for guidance in the word of

God. They look upon the priest as a specialist, in exactly the same sense that a doctor or lawyer is a specialist. If they want legal counsel, they seek a lawyer; if they want medical advice, they seek a physician; and if they want religious instruction, they call for the priest, accepting his religious dictates with the same unquestioning submission given the doctor or lawyer. Consequently, the average Catholic actually believes that he cannot understand the Bible, and that if it apparently contradicts Catholic teaching the fault is in his own limited ability to understand rather than an actual contradiction. In some way you must awaken the realization that God's revelation is for man and is to be learned and understood by all.

7. Tradition of the Church: A study of the authority of the Bible will inevitably bring you to a discussion of "church tradition," which is simply the collection of decrees by the popes and Catholic councils. The Catholic view of tradition is clearly stated in **The Spirit of Catholicism***** by Karl Adam: "(The Pope) is bound — to proclaim and interpret that revelation which is contained in the written and unwritten mind of the Church, in the **twin sources of faith**, sacred Scripture and Tradition." (p. 43.) (Emphasis Mine, H. H.) "The Gospels present us with only a fragmentary record of Jesus, from which it is impossible to construct an exhaustive picture. And so I learn the complete Christ, not from the Bible, but from the uniform life of the whole church, a life fertilized by the teaching of the apostles. Without the living, uniform tradition of the Church, essential elements in the picture of Christ would remain either enigmatical or hidden from me." (p. 63.) "There is no revealed doctrine proclaimed by the Church which is not contained in its exact substance in the sources of revelation, that is, in Scripture and Tradition." (p. 153.) Upon these premises the Catholic source of authority stands or falls. "Oral tradition . . . is prior to and more fundamental than the Bible. It attests to the Bible, both in its inspiration and its canon. It is more comprehensive than the Bible, for it attests a mass of ritual and religious usage, of customs and rules, which is only slightly indicated in the Bible. And it possesses a quality which the Bible as a written document has not and cannot have . . . , that living spirit of revelation, that vitality of revealed thought, that 'instinct of faith' which stands behind every written and unwritten word, and which we call the 'mind of the Church'." (p. 169.)

Against this barrier there are two possible attacks. First, you can endeavor to break it down by showing the all-sufficiency and permanency of the New Testament. For example, I find it effective to

point out that Paul declared the Scriptures complete (2 Tim. 3:16, 17); the apostles were promised the Holy Spirit to guide them into all truth, and they claimed to have preached the "whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27); Peter affirmed that the apostles' words (not church tradition) were to be followed even after their death (2 Pet. 1:15), because they were "eyewitnesses" (v. 16) and spoke by inspiration (19-21); Peter was explaining how God had given man "all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (v. 2); Jude stated that these things ("the faith") were delivered to the saints "once for all," not to be supplemented from age to age. (Jude 3.) These passages are merely suggestive; you can and must find others.

The second method of attacking the Catholic faith in Tradition is to show that it is wholly incompatible with the Bible. If both are inspired of God, they must agree. Show specific points of doctrine held by Roman Catholicism which cannot be harmonized with the Bible. . . . Sprinkling, purgatory, extreme unction, worship of saints, statues and relics, etc. Prepare your case well, and urge it unrelentingly. You have failed unless you make your friend see that tradition is vain and "makes void the law of God." If Catholic tradition is of equal authority with the Bible, Catholics are right in everything they teach, without a single exception. Here is a barrier that must be broken down.

8. Church Authority: Underlying the Catholic attitude toward tradition is the conception of church authority blindly accepted by every member of the Roman Catholic church. So basic is this conception that it may well be the deciding factor in the conversion or non-conversion of a Catholic. Unless his faith in the absolute authority of the church is penetrated he will never turn from the many errors which he accepts solely on the basis of that authority. Gradually, over a period of centuries the Roman church steadfastly brought into subjection the individual thought of its members.

The completeness of this development can be seen in two quotations from Karl Adam: "It is the teaching authority of the Church which proclaims the revelation in its complete fullness . . . ; and it is the same authority which watches over the process of the unfolding of the implicit truths. . . . And lastly it is the teaching authority alone that gives final solemn decision regarding the revealed character of a truth." (pp. 156, 157.) "The Catholic knows that the rule of the Church incarnates absolute truth, justice, and love. . . . Therein lies the secret of that childlike obedience, so incomprehensible to the outsider, which the Catholic gives to his Church, an obedience where-

by he freely and cheerfully submits his own little notions and wishes to the will of Christ expressed in the action of authority; and obedience whereby his own small and limited self is enlarged to the measure of the great self of the Church. That is no corpse like obedience or slave mentality, but a profoundly religious act, an absolute devotion to the will of Christ which rules the Church, a service of God." (pp. 32, 33.)

From this it is clear that the Catholic submission to the authority of the church, although blind, is also deeply religious and reverential. This means that greater study and wisdom will be required to show that the authority of the church is not infallible. There are two effective avenues of approach to this barrier. First, you can attack the fortress directly by showing the absurdity of the assumption that the authority rests in the kingdom instead of the King; in the body instead of the Head; in the **Church** instead of **Christ**. Prepare your attack well and be ready to show conclusively that Christ has all authority and that He has never submitted that authority to any of His subjects.

The second and perhaps the most effective avenue of attack upon the fortress of "Church Authority" is one of indirection. First probe the defenses of your prospect until you have found a point of weakness within some specific Catholic doctrine — purgatory, the priesthood, saint worship, relics and images, sprinkling, succession, etc. If he is ever convinced that a single point of doctrine is false, you have a wedge with which to destroy the whole fortress of church authority. Having found such a wedge, use it insistently to show that an authority which allows one error may allow a thousand.

9. The Priesthood: Just as church tradition stands upon church authority, church authority rests ultimately in the papacy and finds expression in the priesthood. Karl Adams says (p. 26), "When the Catholic priest proclaims the word of God, Christ Himself preaches through him. Certainly this authority of Christ is most plainly and strikingly expressed in the doctrinal pronouncements of His Vicar; but it is present also in the preaching of the simple parish priest in his remote village church." In Catholic thought, besides his authoritative preaching, the priest is also the representative of the people before God. As priest he is mediator. In some way your friend must be made to realize that it is vain to seek God through human agency, and that the priesthood is only a human agency.

Some have been led from under the authority of the priesthood by a consideration of Paul's statement that "There is one God, and

one Mediator between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus." (1 Tim. 2:5, Catholic Version.) The entire system of the Priesthood is based upon the Levitical priesthood, according to the informed Catholic. (See Campbell-Purcell Debate, p. 23.)**** However, Heb. 7:12-14 reminds us that only one of the tribe of Levi could serve in that priesthood. How many Catholic priests can establish such a genealogy? Even Jesus could not be priest on earth, because He was not of the priestly tribe. What Catholic priest can set aside the restriction that even Christ could not disregard?

10. **Sundry Barriers:** Besides the fundamental doctrines already mentioned there are many others which stand between the Catholic and the gospel. These barriers must be broken down and turned against the Catholic stronghold. The limits of this chapter forbid individual notice of these, but remember that each may be a barrier or a wedge. If you can stir doubt regarding the truthfulness of any one of them, you have found a crevice in the wall of the "Catholic mind" which may be the door of entrance. Convinced of a single error, no Catholic is more formidable than any other sectarian. Therefore, prepare your case well against the confessional, purgatory, saint worship, the sacraments, sprinkling, the crucifix, relics, images and any other major or minor Catholic belief or practice. Even a small point may prove the very barrier which can be turned into a wedge for picking away more fundamental errors. Try first one point then another until you find a weakness in your friend's defense. Having found a **specific** troubling point, lead directly to the point; refuse to be sidetracked — teach, urge, persuade — shake him to the depths of his heart. Procure, if possible: Rowe, John F.: A History of Reformatory Movements, Published by the author. Copyrighted 1889. The various editions are hard to get — out of print.

General Observations

There are a number of general observations which need our attention before closing this chapter. These I catalogue briefly with little comment. Meditate upon them and add others as experience suggests. In seeking to break down the barriers among Catholics you will be particularly aware of the timeliness of Jesus' advice: "Be therefore wise as serpents, and guileless as doves." (Matt. 10:16, Catholic Version.) Pray for wisdom.

1. **Concentrate on teaching individuals rather than hoping to reach masses.** The Catholic Church forbids her members to attend non-Catholic religious gatherings, and although there will be a few

scattered exceptions, the masses will respect the wish of the Church in this. Your first problem is to find an individual who promises to be a likely prospect.

2. Cultivate friendship and confidence by kindness and neighborliness. Unless you have the respect of your Catholic neighbor you need not attempt to teach him the truth. Make opportunities to perform small services and forge a chain of friendship which will stand the stress of definite, if not violent, religious differences. This is far more important than at first it may appear. The tie which binds a Catholic to his church is so strong that, unless you have a genuine tie of friendship to offset it, the door of opportunity will slam shut after the very first conversation.

3. Have as clear and positive conviction as any Catholic. The one thing which has put Protestantism on the run before Catholicism is the positive, aggressive conviction of the Catholic members and teachers. The only thing which can meet such conviction is equal conviction. Denominationalism can never touch Catholicism with its "broad-minded" stand-for-nothing attitude. It will be a sad day for the church when her members become too spineless to contend for the church above all else. Meet Catholicism with full conviction, or not at all, for "he who hesitates is lost." You will find that nothing so completely leaves a Catholic speechless as your conviction that you represent God and His church and that all that differs must be error.

4. Avoid random talk and wrangling. Never be satisfied to talk in circles about your own assurance and the errors of Catholicism. Experiment until you have found an effective point, and then urge it, refuse to leave it. Give definite evidence to sustain your position. If discussion of a given point reduces to wrangling, move deliberately and methodically to another, returning to the first at a more opportune time. Be definite; be aggressive; refuse vain wrangling.

5. Do not "beat around the bush." Catholics are reared on authority, and every doctrine they believe is held dogmatically, with no effort to disguise their conviction. Never speak unkindly nor thoughtlessly, but always leave no doubt as to the meaning of your statements or your conviction that he holds error. A Catholic cannot be converted to anything which will not, or cannot, meet his own religion and defeat it in open discussion.

6. Avoid anger and unnecessarily causing anger. When you become angry you forfeit the cause which you represent, and when you needlessly and thoughtlessly cause anger in another you close the

door of his heart. This does not mean that you should shun clear-cut issues. The opposite is true. If your friend becomes angry at the truth, you have no choice but to teach the truth. However, make sure that his anger is not aroused simply by your own insulting and bungling manner of discussion. Be frank and uncompromising but withal be a **gentleman**.

7. Avoid sensational and fear tactics. Too much opposition to Catholicism has been purely prejudicial. The cruelties and misdeeds of the Roman Catholic church have been many in various periods of history, but the zealous Catholic will resent all charges we could bring against the church. Be more concerned with the errors taught **now** by the Roman church. When you have successfully shown that the church holds fundamental errors of doctrine your case is a thousand times stronger than if it were based upon stories, even authentic ones, of mass murders perpetrated by Rome.

8. Gather accurate information. This was discussed in the early part of the chapter. From Catholic sources learn **what** Catholics teach and exactly the **sense** which they attach to their teaching. Read their outstanding books for an over-all knowledge of Catholicism; read their periodicals for their methods of appeal and the actual application of their cardinal doctrines; watch the newspapers for developments indicating their spirit and methods. Never misrepresent their teaching; you can find enough error without misrepresentation.

9. Use tracts with discretion. No Catholic will be converted merely by tracts. They are strictly forbidden to read literature which contradicts Catholic teaching, and every devout Catholic will generally heed that rule. After you have cultivated friendship and aroused interest a well-selected tract can be used to advantage. Never hand out "Protestant" tracts indiscriminately just because they are "anti-Catholic." You gain nothing by converting your Catholic friend from one error to another. Be sure that all literature used is true to God's word.

10. Make the Bible the final source book. Your chief concern should be to bring the Catholic into an intimate association with the gospel of Christ, which is "the power of God unto salvation." You may otherwise, after long arguments, with difficulty lead a friend or neighbor out of the Roman Catholic church and make him a "protestant" against Rome, but only by sowing the seed of the kingdom in his heart can you make him a genuine Christian. It is well to be acquainted with the history of the apostasy and be able to use accurate history effectively, but avoid making that your chief appeal.

11. **Use a good Catholic version of the Bible.** You will find upon investigation that these are only slightly less pointed in controversial passages than the standard versions. Insist upon a comparison of versions in order to destroy the force of Catholic propaganda against the correctness of so-called "Protestant" versions. The passages which expose Catholicism in the King James Version will do the same thing in The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine Edition. Make it clear that the footnotes are not a part of the text.

12. **Avoid sophistry — Catholicism is a mass of it.** You will do well not to trust your clever arguments, but trust the Word to convict of error. Be sure that your arguments are eminently scriptural. Shun mental twists and logical tricks, except as they can be clearly justified by the Bible. Catholics are steeped in "casuistry." That is a good word to know and a good practice to eschew, if you would convert a Catholic.

13. **Offer an adequate filler for the vacuum which will be created by a departure from the "Faith of Our Fathers."** Unless you can show your Catholic friend that the gospel offers something better than every desirable feature of Catholicism, you labor in vain to convert him. Paul affirms that all spiritual blessings are in Christ. If that is true, you should be prepared to show that every blessing claimed for Catholicism is in reality found only in Christ, and His church. Protestantism with its many divisions and lack of positive conviction offers no appeal to the Catholics. The New Testament church can and must meet the challenge, for it alone can stand before the attacks of Rome and offer an appeal to Rome's subjects.

14. **Have patience.** We can to some extent make allowances for well-meaning Catholic people who are more to be pitied than blamed for their ignorance and intolerance. The priests and bishops must bear the blame for instilling such blindness toward Christ. The masses have been so indoctrinated that it is difficult for them to see, or even imagine that their faith is without foundation. They just cannot conceive the possibility of error. Truths which appear very obvious to us may be most difficult to impress upon the understanding of a Catholic, because of his background. Try to realize that his whole spiritual constitution has been poisoned by error. Just as the body which has been poisoned by contaminated food cannot retain good food, so the Catholic mind, poisoned by tradition, cannot retain sound doctrine. Realizing this, let us be patient, teaching the word of God "precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon

line; here a little, there a little" until the power of God turns our friend from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. Try! One soul is worth more than a thousand worlds.

- * Gibbons, James Cardinal. **Faith of Our Fathers**, 110th revised and enlarged edition. Baltimore, John Murphy Co., 1917.
- ** O'Brien's **The Faith of Millions**. 6th edition. Our Sunday Visitor, Huntington, Ind., 1938.
- *** Karl Adam's **The Spirit of Catholicism**. Revised edition. Translated by Don Justin McCann, O. S. B. 1943.
- **** **Campbell - Purcell Debate**. (A debate on the Roman Catholic Religion between Alexander Campbell and the Right Reverend John B. Purcell, Bishop of St. Louis, Christian Board of Publication, St. Louis, Mo., 1837.)

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