

Romanism: the Religion of Human Nature

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The Man of Sin

There is great need that all who claim to be Bible Christians should take the Scriptures as they read. There is need of arriving at right conclusions as to what the Scriptures mean in their reference to the man of sin, who thought to change times and laws. He had no real power to change the time and the law of God, but he thought himself able to do this work; for he:

2 Thessalonians 2

⁴ ...opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

He is an imitator of the first great rebel, the originator of sin. In heaven Satan thought to change the laws of God, and for this purpose he changed his character and his position in the heavenly courts, and influenced others until they united with him in the work of rebellion against God; but he did not succeed in changing the law of God.

God did not alter or change his form of government to suit Satan's ideas, but made it manifest that the foundation of his government in heaven and earth is as unchangeable as is the throne itself.

When Satan could not induce all the angels to revolt against the law of God, he made the earth the scene of his rebellion, and through the man of sin seeks to carry out his diabolical purpose.

Through the Papacy, the Roman power, the man of sin, the purpose of Satan is carried out among men; the law and the time of God are set aside.

In this we see that Protestantism is giving encouragement to popery; and false systems of worship, against which our fathers manfully opposed themselves, imperiling even property and life, are fostered and cherished and encouraged to extend and gain wide influence. Protestants do not search their Bibles as they should, and do not heed the warning that has been given concerning the work of the man of sin.

The Place of the Bible

The Roman Church claims that the pope is invested with supreme authority over all bishops and pastors, and this claim of supremacy was once denied by Protestants. They took the position that the Bible, and the Bible alone, constituted the rule of faith and doctrine, that the word of God is the only unerring guide for human souls, and that it is unnecessary and harmful to take the words of priests and prelates instead of the word of God.

To the Romanist, the Bible is a forbidden book because it plainly reveals the errors of the Roman system; and whoever searches the Bible with an enlightened understanding, cannot long be in harmony with Romanism. He who searches the Bible to understand the truth, will find no authority in the word of God for the assumption of power on the part of popes and cardinals. There is no word of God that sanctions their assumed superiority or supremacy over their people, as there is no word to sanction the claim that Lucifer made in heaven of superiority over Christ.

The claim of the Papacy to superiority is made under the influence of the first great usurper, who so persistently urged his right to supremacy over the host of God. Through the Dark Ages,—that long night of ignorance and superstition,—the claim of the Papacy to superiority and supremacy was conceded by emperors and kings, although God had sanctioned no such concession, and raised up men to dispute the claim, and to break the Romish yoke from the church of God.

Through his appointed agencies God summoned the church to reassert her independence, and in the strength of God she stood forth in the liberty wherewith Christ had made her free. She broke away from the papal yoke, and with the word of God in her hand, met the giant evil of Romanism, even as David met Goliath in the name of heaven, using his sling and a few pebble-stones. The defier of Israel was slain before the man of faith; and while men cling to the word of the Lord, they cannot affiliate with the great system of error.

The Lord has pronounced a curse upon those who take from or add to the Scriptures. The great I AM has decided what shall constitute the rule of faith and doctrine, and he has designed that the Bible shall be a household book. The church that holds to the word of God is irreconcilably separated from Rome.

The Struggle for Bible Truth

Protestants were once thus apart from this great church of apostasy, but they have approached more nearly to her, and are still in the path of reconciliation to the Church of Rome.

Rome never changes. Her principles have not altered in the least. She has not lessened the breach between herself and Protestants; they have done all the advancing.

But what does this argue for the Protestantism of this day? It is the rejection of Bible truth which makes men approach to infidelity. It is a backsliding church that lessens the distance

between itself and the Papacy.

It is souls like Luther, Cranmer, Ridley, Hooper, and the thousands of noble men who were martyrs for the truth's sake, who are the true Protestants. They stood as faithful sentinels of truth, declaring that Protestantism is incapable of union with Romanism, but must be as far separated from the principles of the Papacy as is the east from the west. Such advocates of truth could no more harmonize with "the man of sin" than could Christ and his apostles.

In earlier ages the righteous felt that it was impossible to affiliate with Rome, and, though their antagonism to this system of error was maintained at risk of property and life, yet they had courage to maintain their separation, and manfully struggled for the truth. Bible truth was dearer to them than wealth, honor, or even life itself. They could not endure to see the truth buried under a mass of superstition and lying sophistry.

They took the word of God in their hands, and raised the standard of truth before the people, boldly declaring that which God had revealed unto them through diligent searching of the Bible. They died the cruelest of deaths for their fidelity to God, but by their blood they purchased for us liberties and privileges that many who claim to be Protestants are easily yielding up to the power of evil.

But shall we yield up these dearly bought privileges? Shall we offer insult to the God of heaven, and, after he has freed us from the Romish yoke, again place ourselves in bondage to this antichristian power? Shall we prove our degeneracy by signing away our religious liberty, our right to worship God according to the dictates of our own conscience?

The voice of Luther, that echoed in mountains and valleys, that shook Europe as with an earthquake, summoned forth an army of noble apostles of Jesus, and the truth they advocated could not be silenced by fagots, by tortures, by dungeons, by

death; and still the voices of the noble army of martyrs are telling us that the Roman power is the predicted apostasy of the last days, the mystery of iniquity which Paul saw beginning to work even in his day.

Protestants not Walking in the Light

Roman Catholicism is rapidly gaining ground. Popery is on the increase, and those who have turned their ears away from hearing the truth are listening to her delusive fables. Papal chapels, papal colleges, nunneries, and monasteries are on the increase, and the Protestant world seems to be asleep.

Protestants are losing the mark of distinction that distinguished them from the world, and they are lessening the distance between themselves and the Roman power. They have turned away their ears from hearing the truth; they have been unwilling to accept light which God shed upon their pathway, and are therefore going into darkness. They speak with contempt of the idea that there will be a revival of the past cruel persecution on the part of Romanists and those who affiliate with them.

They do not recognize the fact that the word of God fully predicts such a revival, and will not concede that the people of God in the last days shall suffer persecution, although the Bible says,

Revelation 12

¹⁷ The dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Religion that Suits the Carnal Mind

Popery is the religion of human nature, and the mass of humanity love a doctrine that permits them to commit sin, and yet frees them from its consequences. People must have some form of religion, and this religion, formed by human device, and yet claiming divine authority, suits the carnal mind.

Men who think themselves wise and intelligent turn away in pride from the standard of righteousness, the ten commandments, and do not think it is in harmony with their dignity to inquire into the ways of God. Therefore they go into false ways, into forbidden paths, become self-sufficient, self-inflated, after the pattern of the pope, not after the pattern of Jesus Christ.

They must have the form of religion that has the least requirement of spirituality and self-denial, and as unsanctified human wisdom will not lead them to loathe popery, they are naturally drawn toward its provisions and doctrines. They do not want to walk in the ways of the Lord.

They are altogether too much enlightened to seek God prayerfully and humbly, with an intelligent knowledge of his word. Not caring to know the ways of the Lord, their minds are all open to delusions, all ready to accept and believe a lie. They are willing to have the most unreasonable, most inconsistent falsehoods palmed off upon them as truth.

Satan's masterpiece of deception is popery; and while it has been demonstrated that a day of great intellectual darkness was favorable to Romanism, it will also be demonstrated that a day of great intellectual light is also favorable to its power; for the minds of men are concentrated on their own superiority, and do not like to retain God in their knowledge.

Rome claims infallibility, and Protestants are following in the same line. They do not desire to search for truth and go on from light to a greater light. They wall themselves in with prejudice, and seem willing to be deceived and to deceive others.

God's Commandment-Keeping People

But though the attitude of the churches is discouraging, yet there is no need of being disheartened; for God has a people who will preserve their fidelity to his truth, who will make

the Bible, and the Bible alone, their rule of faith and doctrine, who will elevate the standard, and hold aloft the banner on which is inscribed,

Revelation 14

¹² The commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

They will value a pure gospel, and make the Bible the foundation of their faith and doctrine.

For such a time as this, when men are casting aside the law of the Lord of hosts, the prayer of David is applicable:

Psalm 119

¹²⁶ It is time for You, Lord, to work; for they have made void Your law.

We are coming to a time when almost universal scorn will be heaped upon the law of God, and God's commandment-keeping people will be severely tried. But will they lose their respect for the law of Jehovah because others do not see and realize its binding claims?

Let God's commandment-keeping people, like David, reverence God's law in proportion as men cast it aside and heap upon it disrespect and contempt.