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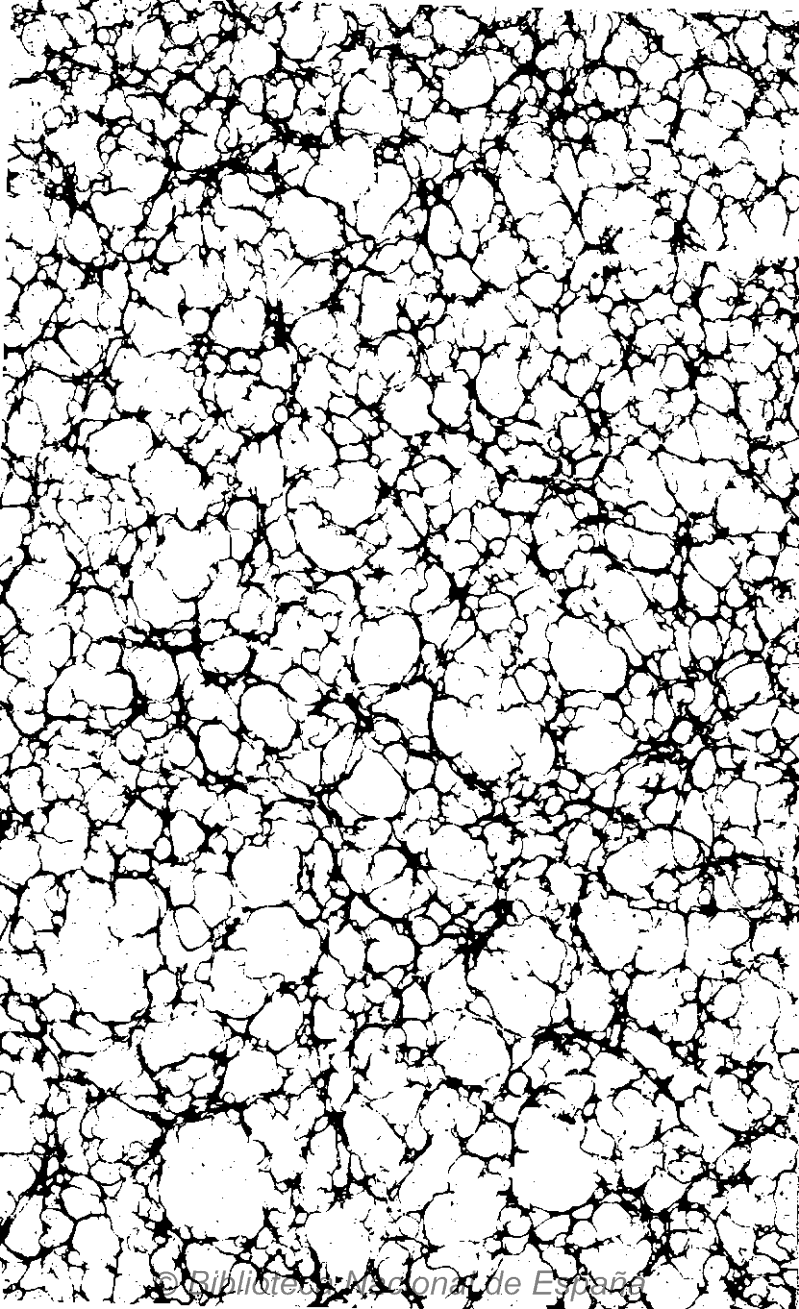
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# ROME AND THE BIBLE.

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## ROME AND THE BIBLE.

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If a person has ever allowed himself to *think* on religious subjects, he must have been struck with the remarkable circumstance, that the Clergy of the Church of Rome have always shown an extreme unwillingness to sanction or (where they had the power) even to permit the reading of the Bible by the Laity of their Communion. Whatever the *reason* may be, the *fact* is indisputable. They fully acknowledge the Bible to be the Inspired Word of God, which He has given to his creatures for their instruction: but still they declare, and constantly have declared, that the Laity at large ought not to read it.

Now, if the Bible be God's own Word, given for man's instruction, any person who gives himself the trouble to *think*, cannot help putting the question: *Why should the Laity be hindered, so far as their Priests can hinder them, from reading such a Book?*

A Clergyman of the Church of Rome will answer, that *the only reason why the Church wishes to withhold the Bible from the Laity, is a benevolent Christian fear lest the perusal of it should do them mischief; for the unrestrained perusal of the Bible by the Laity is sure to produce Heresy.*

Our supposed quiet *thinking* man will be apt to set down this as a very odd answer to a very simple question. He will, I fancy, be strongly tempted to reason as follows.

“The Bible must be, either *plainly favourable, or*

*plainly unfavourable*, to the Religious System taught by the Church of Rome.

“If it be *plainly favourable*: then it seems very strange that the Clergy of that Church should wish to keep from the Laity a Book which is decidedly *favourable* to their own views, and which, therefore, must needs *confirm* the People in a reverential affection for the Pope and Church of Rome.

“But if it be *plainly unfavourable*: then, indeed, the Romish Clergy may well wish to keep it out of the hands of the Laity; yet, in that case, the Religious System of Rome cannot be the truth, because, by the supposition, it stands *opposed* to what the Romish Clergy themselves admit to be God’s own Word.

“We are told, however, that the reading of the Bible by the Laity will certainly produce Heresy.

“What is Heresy, as the word is perpetually and familiarly used by a Romish Priest?

“Indisputably, the Church of Rome and her Clergy always apply the name of *Heresy* to any thing which contradicts their own Doctrinal System: and the Roman Clergy, anxious for the good of my soul, assure me that by reading the Bible I run a great risk of falling into Heresy of this description.

“But how can this be, if the Bible teaches us *exactly* as the Romish Clergy teach?

“On such a supposition, it would rather preserve me *from* Heresy, than lead me *into* Heresy.

“Surely, the Clergy of the Roman Church are not teachers of Heresy: for *they* assure us, that *they alone* infallibly deliver the truth. Therefore, if the *Bible* teaches exactly what *they* teach: then the *Bible* can no more teach Heresy than *themselves*.

“As the matter is stated by these Priests, the Bible can only teach Heresy, either by *omitting* to teach what they teach, or by teaching something *contrary* to what they teach.

“If, then, the Bible either *fails to support* these Priests, or *directly contradicts* them, I can perfectly

understand why they should object to its perusal by the Laity: but if, as they admit, the Bible be the Word of God Himself, then I cannot comprehend how it can teach Heresy; or, in other words, how the Bible can be in the wrong, and these Priests be in the right. No doubt, the Bible *may* be wrested and perverted by corrupt men from its plain sense, just as any other book *may* be wrested and perverted, if men be predetermined to quibble, and to impose false constructions: and in this sense the Bible may be made to teach Heresy. But even this does not apply to the case where the Bible *omits* to teach what these Priests teach: for no man can wrest a passage where no such passage occurs in the Bible: as, for instance, any passage which should teach the doctrine of purgatory. Nor can it apply to the case where the Bible teaches things contrary to what these Priests teach. For it is absurd to say, that a man *wrests* Scripture merely because he proves it to be contrary to their teaching. As, for instance, in regard to the worshipping of any object but God; which is a thing expressly prohibited in Scripture. In this case, they could never say that it is wresting Scripture, unless they could show that to prohibit a thing is to sanction or enjoin it. And no man can surely be so absurd as to say, that a *prohibition* is a *sanction* or an *injunction*.

“Were the *whole* Religious System of Rome clearly written in the Bible, so that the wayfaring man should not err therein; the Priests, purely on the principle of plain common sense, and simply to strengthen their own hands, would *encourage*, rather than *discourage* its perusal by the Laity.

“With the full assurance of well-grounded confidence they would say: *Look here, and judge for yourselves, whether our teaching and the Bible’s teaching do not exactly agree. You may like, or you may dislike, our Doctrines: but here they are in God’s own Word. This you cannot deny: because your own eye-sight convinces you: and seeing, we all know, is believing.*

“So the priests would act, if the Bible were palpably and undeniably on *their* side. But they do the *very reverse*. They caution us *against* the Bible, because the Bible will teach us *Heresy*.”

“The meaning of which can only be: that, either tacitly or explicitly, either by ominous omission or by flat contradiction, the Bible will so teach, as to lead us to doubt whether the Romish Clergy are *themselves* faithful and honest and Scriptural teachers.

“All this is very odd: and, it must be owned, looks very suspicious.”

Thus reasoning from the notorious conduct of the Clergy of the Church of Rome, our thinking individual will naturally be anxious to resort to FACTS, by comparing the avowed System of Rome with what is contained in the Bible: and, of course, just as he finds agreement or disagreement, he will be either confirmed or shaken in his favourable opinion of Roman Theology.

I. We have the principal heads of that Theology very conveniently drawn out by Pope Pius IV., agreeably to the decisions of the Council of Trent: so that we really have nothing to do beyond comparing them with the Bible, and thus at once learning whether they are, or are not, in the Bible. An examination of this kind is merely an Inquiry into a FACT. We may for ever dispute about OPINIONS: but FACTS are stubborn things. To our task, then, let us proceed.

1. The Roman Church requires us to receive seven Sacraments, under the precise aspect that they were all instituted by Christ: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Orders, and Matrimony.

But the Bible says not a syllable about Christ having *instituted* either Confirmation, or Extreme Unction, or Matrimony: and, though Christ enjoined Penitence, or (as the original word really means) a Moral Change of Mind, we read not that He appointed

any thing like Romish Penance under the aspect of its being a Sacrament.

Here, wherever they learned it, the Clergy of the Church of Rome have learned more than the Bible ever taught.

2. The Roman Church declares: that in the Mass, a true propitiatory sacrifice, both for the living and for the dead, is offered up to God, in the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

But the Bible is entirely silent as to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper being a propitiatory sacrifice of any description, or of any avail (*as such*) either to the dead or to the living.

Therefore, wherever the Priests of the Church of Rome learned the Doctrine, they clearly could not have learned it from the Bible; because in the Bible it is no where to be found.

3. The Roman Church affirms the Doctrine of Transubstantiation; so that, by a conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the body of Christ, and of the whole substance of the wine into the blood of Christ, both his body and his blood, together with his human soul and his essential divinity, are really and substantially present in the Sacrament of the Eucharist: and upon this Doctrine of Transubstantiation, which makes Christ to be, literally and substantially, both body and blood and soul and divinity, eaten and swallowed by every individual communicant, she builds the Sacrifice of the Mass; in which, every time that Mass is celebrated throughout the whole world, the Priest is said to offer up Christ to God, as a true propitiatory sacrifice, both for the living and the dead.

Respecting all these extraordinary particulars, the Bible is profoundly silent. In the institution of the Eucharist, nothing more is said by our Lord, than *This is my body*, and *This is my blood*, with an injunction that the ordinance should be observed in remembrance of Him. To assert, therefore, that these words, contrary to the whole analogy of the figurative lan-

guage of Scripture (which says, for instance, that the rock which supplied the Israelites with water in the wilderness was Christ), *must* be understood literally, is not only a begging of the question, but likewise a direct contradiction of the Bible itself: for in the Bible, our Lord and St. Paul still call the elements *bread and wine* even *after* their alleged transubstantiation into his body and blood and soul and divinity; and Christ had previously said, *It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.* Matt. xxvi. 29. Mark xiv. 25. Luke xxii. 18. Compare 1 Cor. x. 16; xi. 26—28. John vi. 63. Nor is this all. The Church of Rome builds the *perpetually repeated* propitiatory sacrifice of Christ in the Mass upon the doctrine of Transubstantiation. But the Bible declares, that Christ was only *ONCE offered to bear the sins of many*; and that, *after he had offered ONE sacrifice for sins, he for ever sat down on the right hand of God.* Heb. ix. 28; x. 10—12. If there be only *ONE* sacrifice for sins, that on the cross, then plainly, according to the Bible, there cannot be *MANY* repeated propitiatory sacrifices for the living and the dead, even every time that Mass is celebrated by a Priest; because *ONE* and *MANY* are direct opposites.

Such being the case, wherever the Priests of the Church of Rome learned the connected doctrines of Transubstantiation and *MANY* propitiatory sacrifices of Christ, they could not have learned them from the Bible: for the Bible flatly contradicts them.

4. The Roman Church requires us to believe: that there is a Purgatory, and that souls there detained are helped by the prayers and suffrages of the faithful.

Not a syllable does the Bible say of all this. Nay, what is still worse, it contradicts it: for it says, *Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, for they REST from their labours.* Rev. xiv. 13. The Bible declares: that pious souls *REST* when they depart hence. Is Purgatory, as graphically described by the Priests of the Roman Church, a state



of REST from labour? Truly they give a very different account of it; and precisely on the ground that it is *not* a state of REST, *but* a state of dreadful though not eternal TORTMENT, they teach, that prayers ought to be made, and the propitiatory sacrifice of the Mass offered, in order that souls may be *delivered* from it. What? Delivered from a state of REST? Nay, say they, it is no place of REST, but a place of TORTMENT. Thus the Bible says *one* thing, and they say *another*.

Wherever the Clergy of Rome picked up the doctrine, they certainly learned nothing of it, either from Moses and the Prophets, or from Christ and the Apostles.

5. The Roman Church declares: that the saints reigning with Christ, ought to be venerated and invoked; that they pray to God for us; and that their relics ought to be venerated.

Not a vestige of all this can be discovered from one end of the Bible to the other: and what is worse for the cause of Rome, the Bible again and again pronounces, that the religious invocation of any, save God alone, is rank and offensive idolatry.

Here the Romish Priests and the Bible are in flat opposition to each other. Consequently either they or the Bible must be in the wrong. *If the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him.*

6. The Roman Church declares: that the images of Christ and the Virgin and the saints ought to be had and retained; and that due honour and veneration ought to be paid to them.

Upon all this the Bible is *more* than silent: it *condemns* any veneration of images, whether graven or molten, as gross idolatry, which to a jealous God is an utter abomination. *Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God.* Exod. xx. 4, 5.

Here, again, these Priests teach one thing and the

Bible teaches another thing. *Both* cannot possibly be in the right. We must choose between the word of the Priests and the word of God.

7. The Roman Church teaches: that she herself, though *junior* to the Church of Jerusalem and to sundry other Oriental Churches, is, nevertheless, both the *mother* and the mistress of all Churches; and that the Pope is the successor of St. Peter.

You may search the Bible from beginning to end: but not a word will you find about any such extraordinary, and indeed contradictory matters.

Wherever the Priests learned them, the Bible, at any rate, was not their teacher.

8. The Roman Church defines: that these several Doctrines are part and parcel of the Catholic Faith, without the belief of which no man can be saved.

Yet, *not one* of them is in the Bible; and *many* of them are directly contradicted by the Bible. For the Bible either never teaches them at all, or else distinctly condemns them: so that they are *all* unscriptural, and *several* of them are absolutely antiscritptural. Would we be saved, therefore, we must, according to the Roman Church, believe Doctrines which are either not revealed in, or which are flatly contrary to, Scripture.

Certainly, the Priests of the Church of Rome, wherever they might have been educated, never learned from the Bible this specially wonderful Doctrine. It would be strange indeed if they did; for they teach *one* thing: and Christ, in the Bible, teaches *another* thing. The word *Antichrist* simply denotes *A person who stands in opposition to Christ*. We may oppose Christ in various ways: but, according to the plain grammatical sense of the word, *every* opponent of Christ is, so far as his opposition extends, *an Antichrist*.

II. Much more, to the same purpose, might have been said; and what *has* been said, might have been greatly extended and enlarged: but this is a Tract, not a Treatise; and the present is quite sufficient to furnish abundant materials for *thinking*.

Indeed, so fully is the Church of Rome aware that her peculiar religious system cannot be extracted from the Bible, that she is fain to call in the aid of Oral Tradition, for the purpose of eking out Scriptural deficiencies, just as the Old Pharisees used to do in our Lord's time: that is to say, she weighs God's word and finds it wanting; and then hits upon the plan of mending and improving it by man's word. She is wise enough, however, to see that man's word will not go down, if offered *as* man's word. Therefore she tricks out her Oral Tradition as a second Bible; gravely assuring us, that it came straight down to her just as it is, from the very mouth of Christ and his Apostles: so that in reality, it is not man's word, but God's word, quite as much as the Bible itself. On the strength of this prodigious assertion, she charges us to receive the Bible and her Oral Tradition with EQUAL affection and reverence: but she is not careful to inform us, how we are to manage this project of EQUALIZATION, when the Bible (as we have seen) teaches *one* thing, and when Oral Tradition teaches quite *another* thing. Be this, however, as it may, we have in the very bringing forward of Oral Tradition, a plain acknowledgment, that the Bible *alone* is much too narrow a foundation for the unwieldy superstructure of Popery. If the Bible had been *sufficient* for the purposes of the Church of Rome, we should never have heard of this same Oral Tradition. But the matter is not at all mended by such an expedient. The project is like hewing out broken cisterns which will hold no water. They talk, indeed, of traditions mentioned by St. Paul; which really mean nothing more, than that he preached and delivered orally the same doctrines as those which were gradually committed to imperishable writing in the New Testament: but this will not serve their turn; for, in the very necessity of things, St. Paul *could not* have delivered doctrines which *contradict* the Bible. Whatever his traditions were, we may be quite sure that they were *not* the Oral Tradition of Rome: for since the Bible

and Oral Tradition directly *contradict* each other, they cannot *both* deliver the truth; and nothing *but* truth *could* have been delivered by an inspired Apostle.

And now: Look on this picture, and on that.

We may, from such an inspection, very readily see, how, in the Romish sense of the word *Heresy*, the reading of the Bible is likely enough to make men heretics.

The Priests of the Church of Rome inculcate a multitude of things, which the Bible either teaches not at all, or (what is still more formidable) directly contradicts and condemns. A reader of the Bible, therefore, soon finds, that he must give up either the Bible or these Priests. Here, he at once perceives the reason why they have always been so unwilling that the Laity should read the Bible. The simple truth is: the Bible is directly against the Priests; whence, lest their crafts should be endangered, the Priests are, upon system, against the free use of the Bible. Accordingly, under the auspices of the Priests, in a neighbouring island, we hear of burning the Bible, and drowning the Bible, and burying the Bible, and warily taking up the Bible with tongs, as if it were some venomous animal.

At present, both in England and on the Continent, the emissaries of the Pope seem to be particularly busy; and in this country more especially, they make no secret of their entertaining the most magnificent expectations. Far be it from us to meet them, even if we possessed the power, with the infernal machinery of persecution. On the contrary, let every man freely make his *choice*: but let him not make it without first *thinking*. Will he follow the Bible, which the Priests themselves allow to be God's Word? Or will he follow the Priests, who contradict and add to God's Word?

BOTH he *cannot* follow.



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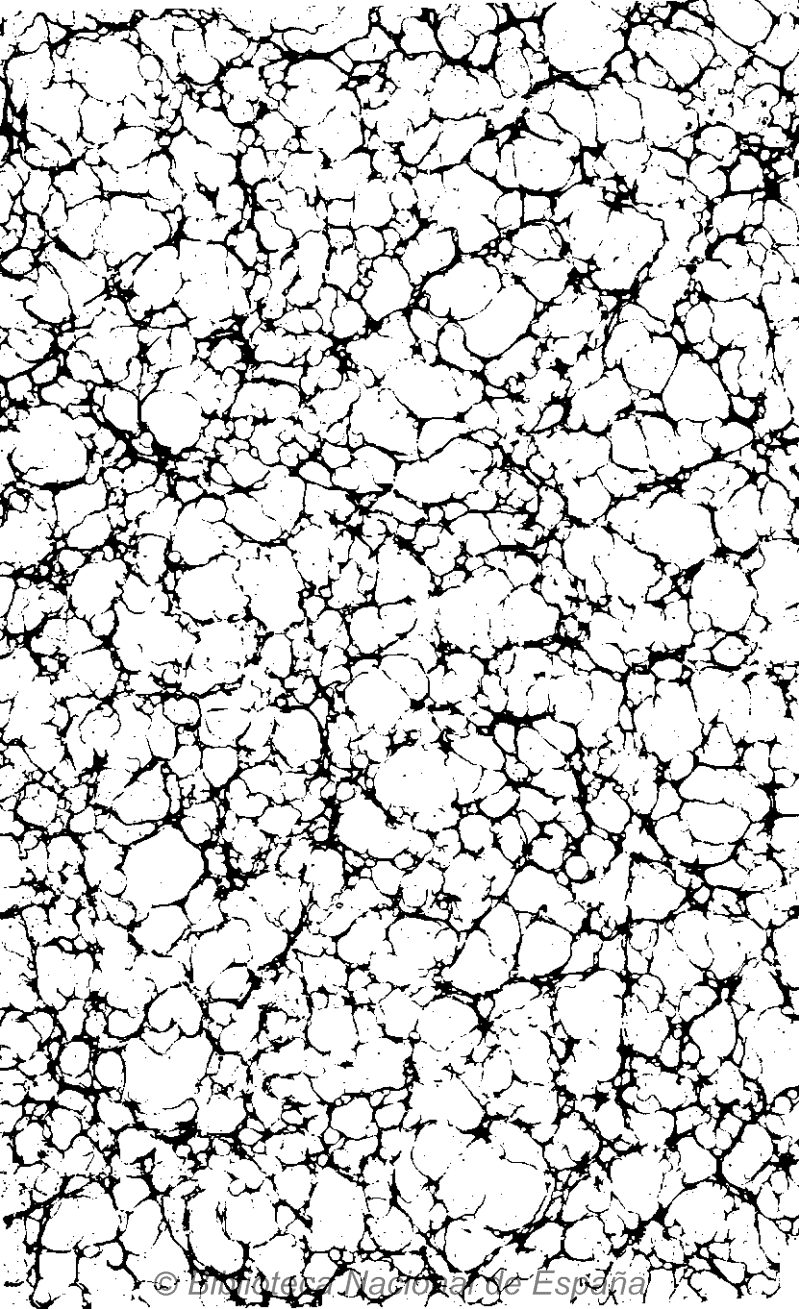
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