

The Test of Protestantism

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The Reformers of the sixteenth century, proclaiming "the Word of God, the whole Word of God, and nothing but the Word of God," as authority in faith and morals, were but re-echoing the words of Scripture itself. For thus it stands written: "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 Tim. 3:16, 17.

One writer, speaking of the Jewish religion of the time of Christ, declares that "they had added tradition to tradition, until the commandments, ordinances, and services of God were lost in a ceaseless round of meaningless rites and ceremonies. Their religion was a yoke of bondage." And this is the exact truth. But in the times of the Reformation, and for many centuries preceding, the forms and ceremonies of the dominant church, based for the most part on traditions supposed to have originated in or soon after apostolic days, had become a more grievous burden and oppression than were the ceremonies of the Jews. The times demanded a reformation. The minds and bod-

ies of men must be emancipated and set free from the shackles which bound them.

The conditions which bound them, therefore, in the first and in the sixteenth century, were similar; and the means of deliverance in each period, identical. Said the Jews, "Why do Thy disciples transgress the traditions of the elders?" Christ replied: "Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? . . . In vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Matt. 15:1-9. Thus it was that Christ utterly rejected every tradition of the religious teachers of His time, and acted and taught only as it was "written" in the plain Word of God. And His platform was adopted and proclaimed by the Reformers.

But "if the Reformation, having attained a certain point, became untrue to its nature, began to parley and temporize with the world, and ceased thus to follow up the spiritual principles that it had so loudly proclaimed, it was faithless to God and to itself.

"Henceforward its decline was at hand.

"It is impossible for a society to prosper if it be unfaithful to the principles it lays down. Having abandoned what constituted its life, it can find naught but death."—*D'Aubigne's History of the Reformation, Book 14, chapter 1.*

Now, have the Protestants, either in the

sixteenth century or at any subsequent time, become untrue to the principles which they at the first "so loudly proclaimed"? Have they at any time "abandoned what constituted their life," namely, "the Word of God, the whole Word of God, and nothing but the Word of God," as the sole basis of faith and morals? If so, the result just mentioned by D'Aubigne are sure to follow. His conclusions are self-evident.

Contrary to the principles taught by Jesus Christ, and re-proclaimed by the Reformers, were those adopted by Rome. Her teaching and practise were that the **Bible AND TRADITION** are to be accepted as the basis of all doctrine pertaining to faith and morals; and that when the two are in conflict, the teachings of the Bible are to be abandoned for those of tradition. Hence, she searched the Protestants to see if they were living in harmony with their principles.

That the mother church, however, was greatly perturbed by the principles of primitive Christianity so ably proclaimed by the Protestants, is evidenced in the fact that at the council of Trent "there was a strong body, even of the Catholics, who were in favor of abandoning tradition and adopting the Scriptures only as a standard of authority in faith and morals. This was so largely and so decidedly held in the council, that the pope's legates wrote to him that there was a strong tendency to set aside tradition

altogether, and to make the Scriptures the sole standard of appeal."—*Ecclesiastical Empires*, page 853.

"Finally, at the opening of the last session, January 18, 1562, all scruples were cast aside; the archbishop of Reggio made a speech in which he openly declared that tradition stood higher than the Bible. For this reason alone the authority of the church could not be bound to the authority of the Scriptures; because the former had changed the Sabbath into Sunday — not by the commandment of Christ, but solely by her own authority. This destroyed the last illusion, and it was hereby declared that tradition signified not so much antiquity, but rather continuing inspiration." The archbishop's words follow:

"The condition of the heretics nowadays is such that they do not appeal to anything more than this (the Bible and the Bible alone; the Scriptures as in the written Word, the sole standard in faith and morals) to overthrow the church under the pretext of following the Word of God. Just as though the church — the body — were in conflict with the word of Christ; or as if the head could be against the body. Indeed, this very authority of the church is most of all glorified by the Holy Scriptures; for while on the one hand the church recommends the Word of God, declaring it to be divine, and presenting it to us to read, explaining doubt-

ful points and faithfully condemning all that runs counter thereto, on the other hand, by the same authority, the church, the legal precepts of the Lord, contained in the Holy Scriptures, have ceased. The Sabbath, the most glorious day in the law, has been merged into the Lord's day. . . . This day, and similar institutions, have not ceased in consequence of the preaching of Christ (for He says that He did not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil it); but yet they have been changed, and that solely by the authority of the church. Now, if this authority should be done away with (which would please the heretics very much), who would there be to testify for the truth and to confound the obstinacy of the heretics?"—*Holtzman's Kanon und Tradition, page 263.*

This argument completely satisfied that element of the council who, through fear of the Protestant principle, had urged that the Catholics adopt the platform of the Bible only, without tradition, as the basis of all doctrines in faith and morals.

With this argument, also, they could meet "heretics" and effectually seal their mouths in reference to their basis of faith. For in the Augsburg Confession itself, the Protestants had clearly admitted that "the church" and it only was the author, appointer, and commander of the so-called Lord's day, and that there was no reference made in Scripture to the first day of the week as a rest-

day or sacred day of any sort at all. See Augsburg Confession, Article 28. Hence in this the Protestants themselves held not to the Bible, but to tradition. **AND BY THIS STAND, THE PROTESTANTS CLEARLY DEMONSTRATED THAT WHERE A TRADITION, BELOVED BY THEM, WAS IN OPEN CONFLICT WITH THE WRITTEN WORD OF GOD, THE LATTER WAS TO BE REJECTED, AND THE FORMER OBEYED. AND THIS IS CATHOLIC GROUND ABSOLUTELY.**

But notwithstanding this self-destructive attitude of the Protestants toward the very foundation of their proclaimed faith, they still continued to announce, and it has passed into most if not all of their "disciplines," "creeds," or "professions of faith," that "the Holy Scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation."

Nearly four centuries have passed since this question was first agitated by the Reformers; and now, strange to relate, Protestants (?) the world over have organized and federated, and are besieging legislators of states and nations for the enactment of statutes to enforce that day which both Catholics and Protestants agree is only a creation of the "early church," and is nowhere commanded in the Bible.

This is not to imply that it would be in any way right to seek a civil enactment in its favor **IF IT WERE COMMANDED IN**

THE BIBLE; but it is evidence indisputable that all professed Protestants who do this, have in every way departed from their original standard of principle, and that they are most earnestly endeavoring to force upon themselves, and the rest of mankind, the one thing in all their religious curricula which most clearly proves their inconsistency — the thing which shows that they do not stand at all consistently upon the ground they have always proclaimed as their standard of faith and practise. And having abandoned that which constituted their life, what can possibly remain for the system except it be death?

But God is not dead; neither is He asleep. He is ready to meet the issue. He always is. He has yet more than “seven thousand men” who stand squarely and consistently on the platform of the Bible, and the Bible only, as the Saviour and His first apostles stood; and they will oppose to all this inconsistency of those who bear the Christian name, the original truths of its Author.

“With malice toward none, and with charity for all,” they invite professing Protestants, Catholics, and all mankind, to return to the faithful Word of God; that Word which, in the last day, shall judge every man.

Miscellaneous Quotes

“The "image to the beast" represents that form of apostate Protestantism which will be developed when the Protestant churches shall seek the aid of the civil power for the enforcement of their dogmas.”--GC 443, 445 (1911)

“Protestantism shall give the hand of fellowship to the Roman power. Then there will be a law against the Sabbath of God's creation, and then it is that God will do His "strange work" in the earth.”--7BC 910 (1886).

“How the Roman church can clear herself from the charge of idolatry we cannot see. . . . And this is the religion which Protestants are beginning to look upon with so much favor, and which will eventually be united with Protestantism. This union will not, however, be effected by a change in Catholicism, for Rome never changes. She claims infallibility. It is Protestantism that will change. The adoption of liberal ideas on its part will bring it where it can clasp the hand of Catholicism.”--RH June 1, 1886.

“The professed Protestant world will form a confederacy with the man of sin, and the church and the world will be in corrupt harmony.”--7BC 975 (1891).

“Romanism in the Old World, and apostate Protestantism in the New, will pursue a similar course toward those who honor all the divine precepts.”--GC 616 (1911).

“As we approach the last crisis, it is of vital moment that harmony and unity exist among the Lord's instrumentalities. The world is filled with storm and war and variance. Yet under one head--the papal power--the people will unite to oppose God in the person of His witnesses. What is it that gives its kingdom to this power? Protestantism, a power which, while professing to have the temper and spirit of a lamb and to be allied to Heaven, speaks with the voice of a dragon. It is moved by a power from beneath. "These have one mind." There will be a universal bond of union, one great harmony, a confederacy of Satan's forces. "And shall give their power and strength unto the beast."” Maranatha pg. 187