

Auricular Confession

by Ian Paisley

Ian Paisley's sermon critiques Auricular Confession as a manipulative and morally corrupt practice within the Papal system, urging believers to reject it and promote true confession among one another.

Scripture: Psalm 119:45, Isaiah 61:1, Matthew 6:14, John 8:32, Romans 12:2, 2 Corinthians 3:17, Galatians 5:1, Ephesians 4:32, James 5:16, 1 John 1:9

Topics: "Catholic Doctrine", "False Teachings"

Description

Ian Paisley passionately denounces the Papal system's practice of Auricular Confession, highlighting its origins in deception and tyranny, emphasizing how it deviates from the teachings of the ancient world and the Word of God. He exposes the dangers and falsehoods perpetuated by the priesthood through the Confessional, leading to moral degradation, manipulation, and the suppression of personal liberty. Paisley warns against the restoration of Auricular Confession in the British Isles, urging individuals to resist this system that exalts priests while degrading the people, ultimately calling for its eradication from the land.

Transcript

No portion of the Papal system presents more originality than the Confessional. The glory and the infamy of this institution is all its own. The idea never entered into the heads of the men of the ancient world. The patriarchs of mankind knew nothing of it, and the wisest seer of those days never contemplated the rise of such a scheme of deluding and imposing on mankind. As to the great legislator of the Jews, nothing was further from his imagination, nor is a single fact to be found in connection with the customs, rites, or literature of any portion of the Pagan world, from which the existence of the idea would be inferred.

It was reserved for "The Man of Sin" to devise and execute this dreadful engine of tyranny and crime in furtherance of his own infernal reign! It is pre-eminently a deed of darkness, having on its forehead the stamp of Lucifer! This, like the other great elements of the Papacy, is founded on a single fragment of the Word of God. There is only one expression, which is available for the operation of the plastic power of the priesthood - James v. 16. "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.

The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availed much." What can be more natural and proper than such an act? If you have committed a fault against a neighbour or a brother in the Lord, you have wounded him, and you have, speaking figuratively, wounded the friendship between you, and this is the only sure way to "heal the breach," which is actually the phrase current among mankind for the

re-establishment of friendship. But, that friendship may be restored, there must be forgiveness, and that there may be forgiveness, there must be confession.

The injunction is, " If he confess, forgive him," and what more comely and proper than that the restored friendship between two men that fear God, should be cemented by prayer? The same point is referred to by the Lord Himself in his form, " Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us." Paul speaks to the same effect, " Forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, bath forgiven you." It is curious to observe how cunning overmatches itself.

The passage in James, on which the doctrine of Extreme Unction is founded, speaks of anointing with a view to recovery; but the extreme unction of Popery is with a view to death, and is never administered till all hope is gone, and the party is expected speedily to die, and with a distinct understanding that he is to die, and that no more shall be done to save him! Hence the practice, after administering extreme unction, is to withhold food and medicine. The administration of this so-called " Sacrament" constitutes an interdict to all further recourse to either food or medicine; die he must, and there is no help for him!

The doctrine of Transubstantiation also rests on a single passage in John vi. which refers solely to the doctrine of the Atonement, and not at all to that of the Lord's Supper; and yet the whole fabric of Transubstantiation and the Mass is founded on a perversion of this single Scripture. Such exactly is the case in the matter of confession. There is but one passage in the whole Word of God that at all admits of being twisted to that purpose; but in the plastic hand of the priesthood this is enough.

The word is spoken, and forthwith the fabric of falsehood arises. Now let it be specially noted that, in the words of James the. confession has nothing whatever to do with the priest. The injunction to confess is directed not to the priest but to the people, who are commanded- to confess, not to him, but to each other! Let the reader specially mark the difference.

This is one of those things, which remarkably illustrate Popish progress, showing the necessity of contending with evil in the bud. in harmony with the Scriptures at the outset, the confession was promiscuous. Men. might confess to each other, to laymen or to priests, but it was at length rendered incumbent to do either the one or the other. These strainings of the Word of God paved the way for more. By degrees confession was elevated into a sacrament, which none but a priest might administer, and to that priest every member of the Papal Church roust confess at a fixed period.

The next step was to lay down the doctrine, that without this confession there could be no forgiveness, and that the priest, as God's representative, could bestow such forgiveness, and the priest only. This brought matters to a crisis; but even there the climax was not reached, nor even approached. Shame had not wholly fled the brow of the confessor, who had not yet ventured to absolve; he only prayed as follows: - "The Lord grant thee absolution and remission." In process of time, however, as the spirit of impiety waged stronger, and mankind, through increasing darkness, became prepared for further bondage, the demands increased, and prayer gave place to an authoritative act of absolution.

The priest attained to the dreadful height of impiety which enabled him to utter the following language:" I absolve thee from thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost "-no mean contribution surely to the fulfilment of the prediction, that " The Man of Sin should exalt himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped." The institution might now be said to be complete, and only one thing was wanted to give it an authoritative stamp, and secure universal compliance with its dictum; and this was reserved for that impious convention known as the Council of Trent, which had the audacity thus

to speak concerning it: -" The Universal Church has always understood that a full confession of sins was instituted by the Lord as a part of the Sacrament of Penance, and that it is necessary by the Divine appointment for all who sin after baptism, because our Lord Jesus Christ, when he was about to ascend from the earth to heaven, left his priests in his place as presidents and judges, to whom all mortal offences, into which the faithful might fall, should be honestly and fully submitted, that they might pronounce sentence of remission, or retention of sins, by the power of the keys:' Thus, then, by a falsehood the most daring, these men give the stamp of their authority to the so-called Sacrament of Confession.

But this baleful confederacy against God and man did not leave the matter here. Delighting to pour out curses on the Protestants, they thus decided: " If any one shall deny that sacramental confession was instituted, or is necessary, by Divine right to salvation, or shall say that the practice of private confession, to a priest is foreign from the institution and command of Christ, and is only a human invention; let him be accursed."

What says the reader to this? The choice is given to men that know the Scriptures and fear God, of either conniving at falsehood, or being subjected to an anathema! Thus the whole institution is clothed in falsehood and steeped in impiety! A curse is here fulminated against the whole Protestant world, which the fierce spirit of Antichrist, were his power equal to his malice, would convert into a hell of torture to every soul who is prepared to stand by the Scripture law, " Let God be true, and every man a liar!"

Before mankind can receive the doctrine of Auricular Confession, the light which is in them must first be darkened, till reason be utterly blinded, and conscience either seared as with a hot iron, or surrendered to the keeping of the priest, it is impossible for this institution to obtain general currency. It is the perfection of iniquity; its history, after its complete establishment, is one of unmingled infamy. It cannot be read without ineffable disgust and horror! It has been fraught with a double curse - a curse to the priest, and a curse to the people!

In wickedly debasing them, he has sorely debased himself. The vampire and his victim have descended together into the depths of sin and wretchedness! Nothing ever happened among men so illustrative of the Scripture that "the wicked shall be filled with their own devices." Had the spirits of Pandemonium consulted together by what means they might best create on earth, a preparatory school for the great work of turning men into devils, they could have hit upon nothing so adapted as Auricular Confession, in the hands of a godless priesthood, the priest himself being intended to occupy the highest place, and to become the chief fiend!

His crime, in part, was his punishment. In addition to his own share of inbred depravity, the corruption of a whole parish is constantly being poured into his bosom! His breath is the reservoir into which all their hearts, as so many fetid streams of depravity and impurity. discharge themselves. All those evils set forth in Scripture - " evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false-witness, blasphemies "keep rushing on in a torrent from day to day into the dark and foul abyss of his soul!

A dozen or a score years of a life so spent, would serve to convert an angel into a demon! Thus the soul of the priest becomes the dread depository of the collective iniquity of multitudes. Simply to sit, as a silent auditor of the endless recitals of all sorts of iniquity, might suffice to assimilate a man to Satan, rendering a creature, whose days are but a handbreadth, as much an adept in iniquity as a being who has lived and transgressed a thousand years! But the priest is not a mere passive receiver of this aggregate

wickedness; were such the fact, it would be innocence itself compared with the part, which, by the laws of his order, he is obliged to play in this tragedy of death.

He is bound, in effect, to tutor the souls of his people in the science and practice of transgression. Himself a professional teacher of evil, the great subject of his study is, not the Word of God, but the heart of man; it is his duty to sound the depth of the depravity of the human soul, -to familiarize himself with all the springs of sin, to search out the sources of temptation, with the peculiar, as well as the common methods of warring against the Lord: in a word, he is bound to perfect himself in the science of turpitude -a course but too congenial to human nature, and which becomes the more sweet, the more its depravity is developed, and the more it has grown up in all things into Apollyon the Destroyer

Such is the daily and nightly study of a Popish priest; nor is this study prosecuted abstractedly and in solitude with his own soul for its subject; the hearts around him are laid open to his gaze, and are ever exposed to his experiments. The young and the old, the rich and the poor, the vulgar and the refined, male and female, the virtuous and the profligate-humanity in all its modifications of state, condition, and circumstance, is the subject on which he conducts his fearful experiments. His system of interrogation is an instrument of a thousand screws fixed on all parts of the human heart, by which, in the mass, they are dragged forth into view. Perfected himself in the knowledge of all wickedness, he diffuses that knowledge on every side, and thus multiplies his own moral likeness among his people. His questions descend, as the plunge of a poignard into the soul, and penetrate it in its deepest recesses; by the operation of the Confessional, iniquity in all its ramifications is taught upon system, and a community of knowledge is established in the congregation or the parish. All souls are rendered familiar with all sins, with all occasions of sin, with all accompaniments of sin, with all consequences of sin, with all the modifications of sin! Thus the whole world of iniquity is laid bare, both to the eye of the priest, and to sinners themselves. Under the pretence that as the priest is both judge and physician, he must know all sin in thought, word, or deed, that he may determine the conditions of absolution, and prescribe the method proper for cure. The priest, sitting as God, must know, and demands to know, all that can be known by God

In dealing with this subject, we feel ourselves laid under the most enfeebling restraints-restraints utterly incompatible with even an approach to a full and adequate discussion. The moral feelings of British society would be altogether outraged even by such an approach. It would fill the virtuous and devout with intolerable loathing, and, among very many, it would fail to obtain belief. The system has reared, from age to age, an army of men for its own service, such as could not have been supplied even by heathen idolatry in the darkest ages of Paganism.

As an Order, they have stood alone, peerless in their impiety, and in their profligacy. Unrestrained by any regard to either God or man, they give the rein to their worst passions, and make havoc of the human race! One feature of this system is so remarkable as to call for special consideration; as if to give full effect to the Satanic principle of the confessional, it was ordained that the priest must be severed from society and all its sympathies, and pass his days in a state of celibacy.

This provision alone was wanted to perfect the machinery of moral destruction. The Father Confessor, uninfluenced by the grace of God, is at the mercy of his passions, combined with the temptations which surround him; from the nature of his office, he is placed in circumstances of the strongest temptation, with every inward incentive, and every outward facility, for the perpetration of iniquity. Is it then, to be wondered at, if men so situated fall, where they do not desire to stand?

Is it to be wondered at, if such men in every land, and in every succeeding age, have become the despoilers of virtue? Is it to be wondered at, if woman was ruined, and man dishonoured? On this subject, were we to suffer history to step forth and deliver her full testimony, years would be required to recite the dreadful chronicle, which would be written within and without, with lamentation and mourning and woe! Who shall enumerate the millions that have cursed the day they first appeared at the Confessional, and thus came under the influence of the foul spirit that presided in it?

Spain, Portugal, Italy, Austria, France, and every other country where the Pope has borne sway, is strewn with the wrecks arising from priestly profligacy! They have been the patrons and promoters of vice the most hateful. and the most destructive. Their mission has been, not to bless, but to curse the people-not to bring health and happiness, but to diffuse pestilence and death! Mankind have groaned in hopeless anguish under the dreadful burden-! It rested, and in spite of the light of' the Reformation and the mitigated circumstances of modern times, it still continues to rest on them, with the weight of a mountain, repressing their energies whether of body or of mind, converting nations into one vast prison-house of intellectual and moral bondage.

All mental freedom is overthrown, and the mind of the people is merely the mind of the priesthood. The thick darkness which broods on those lands hides from the world their true moral condition, which is got at under great difficulties, and at best but imperfectly developed.

We cannot take leave of the subject, without solemnly pressing it upon our readers, that the magnitude and the enormity of the evil, which the language we have employed may suggest, comes far short of the true state of the case. Let them not for a moment suppose there must be exaggeration, for to exaggerate in this matter were utterly impossible! The difficulty is, to attain to expression adequate in any measure, to set forth the truth.

The question then, we have now to put to every reader, is-Do you wish to see the system of Auricular Confession, restored to its ancient sway in the British Isles? By all that is sacred in relation to the purity of woman, the peace of families and the welfare of society, we implore you to ponder the question! It is pregnant with meaning of unutterable moment! It is one of wide range, comprising everything affecting human institutions, and the progress of .the race in wisdom, virtue, liberty and, happiness. Auricular Confession is a huge imposture, laden with every evil; not only is it without foundation in the Word of God, but at utter variance with right reason. The priest is thereby raised into a demon, in his own person uniting the professed pardon of the highest crimes, with the fresh perpetration of them! The Confessional has, to an extent incalculable, -been but another name for seduction, and seduction has oft been but the prelude of murder! What tales might be told by the lime-pits, the subterranean passages, and the spirits of murdered infants

But just in proportion as Auricular Confession exalts the priesthood, it degrades the people. The! presence of the priest invariably divests the disciple of his manhood, and turns him into a crawling reptile of the dust! He cannot stand erect in the presence of the person who knows all his weakness, and all his sins in thought, word, and deed! The eye of his tyrant looks him through and through; and its glance falls upon him as the withering blight of heaven! He quakes, as a spaniel, before his ghostly oppressor! His soul is bound in fetters, and none can deliver him.

Let every man then, as he values his personal liberty, the moral purity of his country, set his face as a flint against the system, of which Auricular Confession is an integral part, and let him unite with all good men in

every wise and well directed scheme, to work its overthrow in these realms. As a plant, which God hath not planted, let all godly and patriotic Englishmen combine to uproot it from the land!

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