

Duties of Protestants

by Ian Paisley

The sermon emphasizes the importance of spreading the Word of God and countering the influence of Popery through various means, including Bible societies, family worship, Sunday schools, and public lectures.

Scripture: Isaiah 5:20, Ephesians 6:17, 2 Thessalonians 2:8, Revelation 14:11, Revelation 18:2, Revelation 18:21, Revelation 22:2

Topics: "Roman Catholicism", "Protestant Reformation"

Description

Ian Paisley preaches about the importance of understanding the strength and principles of the adversary, particularly focusing on the system of Rome and its unchangeable policy. He emphasizes the need for Protestants to contend against the system of Popery by prioritizing the Holy Scriptures as the power of God unto salvation, utilizing family worship, Sunday schools, Christian missions, common schools, and the pulpit to educate and raise awareness about the dangers of Popery. Paisley urges consistency in actions, warning against any support or contribution to the advancement of Romanism, and highlights the ultimate victory over the reign of Antichrist as prophesied in the Bible.

Transcript

IN dealing with an adversary, a point of the first importance, is, to ascertain his strength, and to understand the principles of his policy. This is particularly so in the case of Rome. There is nothing in which her boasted unity is so strikingly manifested; whether in Europe, or America, in China, or in Polynesia, her principle of proceeding is one and unchangeable, and the means she employs to gain her ends are the same.

Perhaps, no man ever more accurately gauged the spirit of the Popedom than Sir Edwin Sandys in his celebrated Europe Speculum. a "Survey of the State of Religion in the Western Parts of the World, wherein the Roman Catholic Religion and the Pregnant Policies to Support the same are notably displayed." This work, published in 1629, has not been surpassed in some of its views by anything which has since appeared on the subject of Popery. We offer the following, as in our judgment, thoroughly expressing the true character of the system against which Protestants have to contend:

"This being the main ground-work of their policy, and the general means to build and establish it in the minds of all men, the particular ways they hold to ravish all affections and to fit each humour (which their jurisdiction and power, being but persuasive and voluntary, they principally regard), are well-nigh infinite ; there being not anything either sacred or profane, no virtue, nor vice almost, no things of how contrary

condition soever, which they make not in some sort to serve that turn; that each fancy may be satisfied, and each appetite find what to feed on.

Whatsoever either wealth can sway with the lovers, or voluntary poverty with the despisers of the world; what honour with the ambitious; what obedience with the humble; what great employment with stirring and mettled spirits; what perpetual quiet with heavy and restive bodies; what extent the pleasant nature can take in pastimes and jollity; what contrariwise the austere mind in discipline and rigour; what love either chastity can raise in the pure, or voluptuousness in the dissolute; what allurements are in knowledge to draw the contemplative, or in actions of state to possess the practic dispositions; what with the hopeful prerogative of reward can work; what errors, doubts, and dangers with the fearful; what change of vows with the rash, of estate with the inconstant; what pardons with the faulty, or supplies with the defective; what miracles with the credulous; what visions with the fantastical; what gorgeousness of shows with the vulgar and simple; what multitudes of ceremonies with the superstitious and ignorant; what prayer with the devout; what with the charitable works of piety; what rules of higher perfection with elevated affections; what dispensing with breach of all rules with men of lawless conditions;-in sum, what thing soever can prevail with any man, either for himself to pursue or at leastwise to love, reverence, or honour in another (for ever therein also man's nature receiveth great satisfaction) ; the same is found with them, not as in other places of the world, by casualty blended without order, and of necessity, but sorted in great part into several professions, countenanced with reputation, honoured with prerogatives, facilitated with provisions and yearly maintenance, and either (as the better things) advanced with expectation of reward, or borne with, how bad soever, with sweet and silent permission.

What pomp, what riot, to that of their cardinals? What severity of life comparable to their hermits and capuchins? Who wealthier than their prelates? Who poorer by vow and profession than their mendicants! On the one side of the street a cloister of virgins; on the other a sty of conrtezans, with public toleration; this day all in masks with all looseness and foolery; tomorrow all in processions, whipping themselves till the blood follows. On one door an excommunication, throwing to hell all transgressors; on another a jubilee or full discharge from all transgression; who learned in all kinds of sciences than their Jesuits?

What thing more ignorant than their ordinary masspriests? What prince so able to prefer his servants and followers as the Pope, and in so great multitude? Who able to take deeper or readier revenge on his enemies? What pride equal unto his, making kings kiss his pantofle? What humility greater than his, shriving himself daily on his knees to an ordinary priest? Who difficulter in dispatch of causes to the greatest? Who easier in giving audience to the meanest? Where greater rigour in the world in exacting the observation of the church laws?

Where less care or conscience of the commandments of God? To taste flesh on a Friday, where suspicion might fasten, were a matter for the Inquisition; whereas, on the other side, the Sunday is one of their greatest market-days. To conclude-never state, never government in the world, so strangely compacted of infinite contrarieties, all tending to entertain the several humours of all men, and to work what kind of effects soever they shall desire; where rigour and remissness, cruelty and lenity, are so combined that with neglect of the Church, to stir aught is a sin unpardonable; whereas with duty towards the Church, and by intercession for her allowance, with respective attendance of her pleasure, no law almost of God or nature so sacred, which one way or other they find not means to dispense with, or at leastwise permit the breach of by connivance and without disturbance."

What a picture! What a cluster! How perfect the system, and how atrocious the principle by which it is animated! Such is the system against which Protestants have to contend. The point, therefore, is to ascertain how, and by what means, the contest is to be carried on. These questions we shall now endeavour to answer.

First. The Holy Scriptures must always, and everywhere, take the precedence as alone the "power of God unto salvation." According to prophecy, the Man of Sin is to be "destroyed by the breath" of the Lord's mouth, and the "brightness of his coming."

The inspired page is the "Sword of the Spirit," with which he slays the enemies of the King. The hatred which the Popish priesthood bear to the Divine Word speaks volumes on this subject. Such hate is the measure of its power to convict, expose, and overthrow.

Popery and the Bible cannot co-exist, one or other must succumb. Let Bible societies, therefore, be multiplied to the extent of the necessity through all the land; and let all Protestants not only support, but to the uttermost cooperate with them in the work of universal diffusion. We attach more importance to this than all other, instruments united. The Bible is the tree whose "leaves are for the healing of the nations;" let its branches, therefore, encircle the whole earth, and I the people of every clime will at length rejoice in cure and health.

Secondly. Family worship constitutes another and a principal means of advancing the great work. In the reading of the Holy Word, and in the running exposition of it, which as much as may be, should be everywhere practised, endless opportunities occur for passing remarks on Popery. In family prayer, too, the subject should have a frequent place, which will greatly contribute to elevate its importance, and to bring it home to the heart and the conscience of a household. With a view to this the heads of families should endeavour to understand the subject, that they may order their words aright.

Thirdly. Next to the family the Sunday school is entitled to particular notice; its exercises ought to make large provision for full instruction on this vital question. A due admixture of special instruction should be always found in the elder classes. A passing remark in the course of the school addresses may likewise have the happiest effects. Small and simple Protestant publications, suited to young people, ought to constitute an element in the Sunday school library. Appropriate exercises on the subject, might be prescribed with great benefit.

The subject ought to be kept specially in view by the conductors of Christian missions-city, town, home, and foreign. The competence of the missionary should be matter of careful examination. Even now an intimate acquaintance with the subject is often called for, and the demand is continually upon the increase.

Fourthly. The Common School supplies a very important means of acting beneficially on the public mind. That school was a mighty power for good in Scotland in the days of the Reformation; but that it may be so again it must be carried on by men of the same ethereal spirit-men wise in heart and full of holy fervour, fervent lovers of the truth, and intense haters of the Man of Sin. Such men will not be satisfied with the mere routine reading of the Holy Scriptures in the school; but, like the associates of Nehemiah, they will "give the sense," and cause the boys "to understand the reading." Such men will do well, at proper times, to give the scholars set addresses on subjects connected with Popery and Protestantism.

There are many touching facts, incidents, and narratives which may be worked up into very effective discourses. The tale of its crimes, cruelties, and abominations will not be lost on the tender sensibilities of

the young. Every schoolmaster, before his appointment, should be subjected to a rigorous examination as to his qualification for this part of his office, which should be considered vital.

Fifthly. In the school of the prophets, special provision ought to be made for thoroughly indoctrinating all young men on the subject of Popery and Protestantism. To this end all the main points should be indicated in a course of lectures, combined with the reading of the best treatises on the subject; and to secure the application necessary, there ought to be on the lecture, and also upon the books, periodical and searching examinations.

Sixthly. The pulpit must ever be the main instrument in carrying on the war against Popery. Much may there be effected by passing remarks in the reading of the Scriptures, by occasional references in the course of sermons, and sometimes by an entire sermon or lecture. Above all, pulpits prayer, in the midst of the assemblies of the saints, may be the means of realizing the greatest blessing.

Apart from the direct benediction, which neverfails to attend the prayer of the faithful, as a moral means of impressing the truth on the mind of men, it surpasses every other. It brings the subject within the hallowed domain of conscience, and thus blends it with the governing principles of the heart and life. Time was, within the memory of a few of the living generation, when it was both most affecting, and most refreshing, to hear the elder ministers of Scotland pouring out their mighty hearts in streams of fervent supplication against Rome, with all her mysteries and all her abominations. May the ministers that now fill their places receive an abundant baptism of the same spirit

Seventhly. Public lectures are a very valuable species of instrumentality, which deserves to be sedulously cultivated. This sort of labour prevailed very extensively in the times of the Reformation in Scotland and elsewhere, and vast were the benefits thence arising.

Eighthly. Periodical literature is a power which can hardly be overvalued. Such publications as the Scottish Bulwark, for example, deserve a foremost place in the regard of all true Protestants. Were the Bulwark, from month to month, to find a place in every British family, it would work wonders both in generating, and in nourishing a true Protestant spirit. That alone, we should deem almost enough to give a check to the progress of the Romish superstition throughout British families.

Ninthly. Good Protestant tracts cannot be too highly prized, and if largely illustrated with appropriate engravings, so much the better; the taste of the time runs greatly in that direction, and thus the truth often finds its way through the eye to the understanding. Popish tracts of this description are being prepared in large numbers, with a view to acting upon the imagination of the masses, conciliating them to Popery, and stirring them up against Protestantism. This is a point to be steadily kept in mind by local associations for the circulation of religious tracts; by a due mixture of these, much may be done to expose the evils of the Vatican.

Tenthly. In meetings of Christians for social prayer, the subject should be steadily kept before the mind of both the leaders and the people. Let the downfall of the ensanguined system of Rome be matter of united, fervent, and frequent supplication. To this end, the leaders in prayer ought themselves to be thoroughly at home in the great subject, and to be well posted up in matters affecting Popery at the present time. The regular perusal of the Bulwark would be very serviceable in this matter.

Such are the chief of the moral and spiritual means of checking and extirpating Popery; but that they may be successfully carried out, there must be in all things consistency in the conduct of those who aspire to

that honour. For instance, it is not consistent for individuals who profess to dissent from Romanism on the ground of its truthlessness and impiety, of its corruption and cruelty, of its opposition to the gospel of mercy and its malignant enmity to Christ the Lord, in any way to lend themselves to its advancement.

Is it consistent in them to give up the substance of which God has made them stewards, to erect schools, churches, so called, and cathedrals? If this be consistency we are at a loss to comprehend the nature of its opposite. Such things, however, have been done-done in many places, and to a considerable extent-done in the teeth of remonstrance from men better taught-and done apparently in a spirit of glorying in the deed as one of laudable liberality. But surely that is a questionable liberality which violates high and holy principles; which takes part with men who are enemies of the Lord, and supplies materials to sustain and extend rebellion against Him.

We are at a loss to understand how any man who professes to be a Christian, can be a party to such proceedings. Such an act is one not of an indifferent character, it is a positive participation in rebellion, so far as means and practical sympathy are concerned, with the enemy of God and his Christ, and can only be set down to the score of ignorance, indifference, or infidelity! The man who does it should renounce his Protestantism. Would Knox, or Calvin, or Luther, have contributed to erect such edifices, and thus furnish the means of corrupting mankind, spreading darkness, and filling the world with death? No; they would sooner have laid their heads upon the block, have been broken on the wheel; or burned at the stake!

These strictures are prompted by the knowledge of what has too often occurred in divers parts of the country. The point is one to which we attach the utmost importance. Nothing can be more incongruous than the issue from the same lips of "sweet water and bitter," than to supply materials for building a house along with materials for burning it down! Such conduct is not merely foolish, but wicked; it ranks with treason to the Most High!

The Roman question is one which ought most', deeply to interest every man in England, whether of the Church or of the world, whatever his rank or condition, his party in politics or in religion. It cannot be too often repeated that Rome is alike the fierce, the inveterate, the irreconcilable enemy of liberty, both civil and religious, all over the world. The, thralldom, which obtains in such horrid perfection in Rome, the Pope and the Cardinals wish to see established everywhere; they desire it to be taken as a': model state.

The truth of the allegation is attested by universal history. The best, and by far the greatest, example of modern times is furnished by the fearful struggle that is now going on in the New World. The Pope, crafty and false, to conciliate the Federals with their Emancipation, sent over a whining pastoral, affecting much sympathy with the slaves. The American archbishop, bishops, and clergy, perfectly understanding his Holiness, preserved their own attitude, and set their faces as a flint against the North and liberty.

One of the ablest of the American journals has borne the following testimony, which we rejoice to place on record in England, as exposing the hypocrisy and wickedness of the Pope and his clergy. The journal testifies as follows:

"We have, on several recent occasions, briefly discussed the attitude of the Roman Catholic clergy of this country with regard to the fearful trials to which our country has been subjected by slaveholding treason. The main facts to which we have from time to time called attention are as follows:

1. In all that portion of our country wherein the rebellion now bears, or has at any time borne sway, the Roman Catholic clergy, from highest to lowest, have, without a known exception, been among its earliest,

most eager, most determined, most persistent champions.

2. In that portion of our country which is predominantly loyal, or practically under the sway of the Federal Government, the great body of that clergy are just as hostile to the struggle for national integrity and authority as they safely can be—discouraging enlistments in the national armies, and training their flocks, so far as possible, into casting a solid vote for the Opposition tickets.

3. The Roman Catholic clergy, with the voters whom they influence, have stubbornly resisted the progress of Emancipation in the Border States. They largely swelled last month the majority against it in Kentucky, turned the scale against it in Delaware, and did their utmost (in vain) to defeat it in Maryland and Missouri.

4. When the rebellion was triumphantly inaugurated in the South, the Catholic priesthood promptly adhered to it on the ground of obedience to 'the powers that be,' which are 'ordained of God;' but this rule was not permitted to operate either in the Slave States which adhered to the Union, or in those which have been recovered to it. On the contrary, though Orleans has been restored to and firmly held by the Union for nearly three years past, her Roman Catholic Archbishop and his clergy are still virulent Secessionists."

Popery, then, involves pre-eminently the question of liberty; we therefore adjure every man in England to take his place in the ranks of British patriotism, and to concentrate his most intense abhorrence on the false, cruel, impious, and diabolical system! Let Rome recover her ancient sway in; the British Isles, and the people are undone! Again will the groaning of the prisoner be heard over all the land! The axe, the gibbet, and the flame will be once more in requisition; the mirth of the land will be gone, and wailing will break forth through all her borders!

We likewise adjure every man, woman, and child enrolled in the Church of the living God, to watch and pray that they enter not into temptation to dishonour the memory of their noble fathers, the founders of English freedom, by bowing down to Popery, the monster that sits on the Seven Hills, destined to be "cast into the lake of fire, burning with brimstone," where the "beast and the false prophet shall be tormented day and night for ever."

The victory is ultimately sure and certain, in spite of earth and hell. The days of the Church's affliction will then be numbered; "the tabernacle of God will be with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God," and shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away."

Babylon is doomed, and the hour of her Overthrow is fixed in the counsels of heaven! The day draws rapidly on when the angel of the Apocalypse will cry, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen!" "The hour of her judgment is come;" the Beast and his image shall for ever perish, and all his worshippers "shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation, and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb, and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever. And they have no rest day nor night who worship the Beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the work of his name."

Let the faithful of every land rejoice in the assurance that the reign of Antichrist shall have an end! Popes, cardinals, and priests, with all that appertains to the accursed system, shall be carried away as with a whirlwind! Then will be fulfilled the words of prophecy, "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her! And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great

millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall the great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all!"

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