

What Is the Individual in the Papal System?

by Ian Paisley

The individual in the Papal system is blind, superstitious, and poor due to the teachings of the clergy and the authority of the priest.

Scripture: Psalm 119:105, Proverbs 4:19, Acts 17:11, 1 Thessalonians 5:21, 2 Timothy 2:15

Topics: "Roman Catholicism", "Biblical Enlightenment"

Description

Ian Paisley preaches about the dangers of the Romish system, highlighting how it leads individuals to blindness, superstition, and poverty. He emphasizes the importance of reading the Bible and being enlightened by its teachings, rather than blindly following the traditions of the Roman Catholic Church. Paisley urges individuals to examine their faith, question their clergy, and seek true enlightenment through the Word of God. He exposes the superstitions and practices within the Romish system that manipulate and control believers, ultimately leading to spiritual enslavement and misery.

Transcript

I shall prove three propositions; first, that in the Romish system, the individual is blind; second, that he is superstitious; third, that he is poor. The teaching of his clergy produces blindness; his veneration for them, superstition; their authority and influence, poverty. Their teaching produces blindness. It is sufficient that the Popish system forbids the reading of the Bible.

True, in Protestant countries, to avoid imputations, the Popish Church permits the sale of a book called the Bible; but that is not the question. It is, is the Bible read every Sunday in a tongue the people understand? No! There is a mass; sometimes a sermon; but never the Bible. Does your priest recommend the reading of the Bible in your families? No!

Now, in a few words, are you enlightened, or are you blind, without the Bible? Ah! If the most learned of men, without it you are nothing; for through it alone moral light streams up upon the world. This is no mere Protestant opinion, for David says in his Psalms, "the Word of God is the light of our feet;" and Saint Peter, "the Word of God is the lamp which lights us in darkness of this world." Romanists reject this light; blindness is their duty. Become a tree, a block, a stone, an unreasoning beast, and you are a good Roman Catholic!

But the Apostle of the Gentiles says, "give to the faith a reasonable answer." Therefore, to have true faith, you must first be persuaded of it; you must examine and discuss it well, that you may give for your faith a

reasonable answer. Be Roman Catholics only because your parents were, and you are not reasonable believers, but unreasoning beasts. *

A second cause of Romish blindness is the Latin worship. Having, in a subsequent Lecture, to examine this point more narrowly, I now only say to Roman Catholics who do not understand Latin, and have not a translation, my dear brethren, do you know anything about your Latin worship? When you pray to the Virgin Mary with an Ave Maria, what do you think about that Latin Ave Maria? When you pray to your Heavenly Father with Pater noster qui es in coelis, what do you know about your Pater noster? When you invoke the Virgin Mary with your Salve Regina, what do you know about your Salve Regina? More; your mass is in Latin; do you understand a word of it? Not one! +

* This argument is often met with a text, " whoever does not obey you, does not obey me, and whoever obeys you, obeys me." But before, Christ said, " as my Heavenly Father sent me, I sent you; whoso will not obey you, he does not obey me," did not exclude, but included, the searching of the scriptures. Then, after having searched the scriptures, and found that the preaching of the priest accords with the Word of God, whoso disobeys the priest, also disobeys God. Saint John says, in his first epistle, " do not believe any spirit, but try the spirits." Saint Paul said to the Galatians, " examine my doctrines, and if they agree with the Word of God, embrace them; if not, I authorise you to anathematise my words." Saint Paul said to the Thessalonians, " prove all things, hold fast by that which is good." The Holy Ghost tell us (Acts, xvii.) that the brethren of Berea were praised before God, in not obeying blindly the teaching of the Apostle Paul, but controlling it by the Word of God. The conclusion is, to be a good Christian you must not blindly obey, but try and control your priest with the Word of God.

+ When I was in Italy, I sometimes amused myself by going into the Churches, to hear the people pray in Latin. No theatre could afford a better specimen of comedy than the people singing psalms, canticles, hymns, litanies in the unknown language, making so many and ridiculous errors, that no buffoonery on the stage could match them. Saint Paul forbids us to pray in an unknown tongue, because the heart remains untouched and cold. From such a worship the Roman Catholic goes away without profit, without moral or spiritual advantage, with a frigid heart and an uninstructed mind. The main object is, that the people may not understand; the result, that not one in ten thousand can give any reason for his worship.

The last proof of blindness is that Romish priests prevent enlightenment. In Italy it is not extraordinary that people living among Romanists remain in darkness and prejudice; but, in Protestant countries, Roman Catholics, if they would, could enlighten themselves; and by discussion, sermons, lectures, newspapers, tracts, be masters of themselves, and even conclude in favour of Popery. Then it might be called their religion, being one of intelligent choice. This their priests prevent!* If they did not, their power, based on error, would vanish forever.+

My second principal proposition is, that the individual in the Popish system is superstitious, because his veneration

* I can speak from my own experience. In Italy, when we preached the liberal cause, even when I was employed by Pius IX. to preach the crusade against the retrograde priests, the Jesuits forbade their penitents to hear me or Ugo Bassi. It is the same in Protestant countries. In England, the priests prevented many from hearing me; here they say from their pulpits, "You must not go." My answer is simple. If, clearly, I am not only an apostate, but a real devil, (only without the horns and tail;) if I speak falsehoods; let the Roman Catholics hear them, that thus they may confirm themselves in their apostolical Popish

church; lies and falsehood cannot destroy a true church. If I be only a humbug, there is no danger in hearing a humbug. But if I speak the truth, and they prevent whom they can from hearing me, the inference is obvious.

+ This being the first of the free lectures announced in No. 2 of the present course, a large portion of the audience was of the lower Irish class. A storm of hisses and groans interrupted the lecturer at this point, and several ladies showed signs of alarm. He said,- I pray the ladies not to fear. A few hisses will hurt no one; and they do not spoil my facts and reasonings. Yet, it seems ungentlemanly to hiss; and where so many ladies are present, I appeal to the Irishmen to show their good feeling and good manners, by preventing the disturbance caused by a few persons. I think Ireland is often unjustly reviled. I know that the Irish priests keep the people in ignorance, and their country is frequently termed a savage country; but the way for Irishmen to escape the imputation, to show that in America, when no longer under the control of their priests, they are gentlemen,- is to restore order here, and prevent the scandal which will spread, namely, that Irishmen know not how to conduct themselves in such a place as this. It is not to Frenchmen, Germans, nor Italians that this tumult will be charged, but to Irishmen; so that their national character is at stake. But if they, or any others, hope to intimidate me from my duty by hisses or groans, they are miserably mistaken.

for his clergy produces superstition. More; superstition re-acts, and increases veneration for the clergy. There is an ancient proverb- "the more blind, the more bigoted;" as veneration for the clergy increases, so does their power. No wonder then that they promote that superstition on which is based their self-interest.

I now make only a few remarks on this head; it shall be handled more fully in a subsequent lecture.

Especially in Ireland the Romish Clergy are worshipped as a God. In Italy, yes and no. In Germany, certainly not. In Ireland the priest as a God; the parish priest more than a God.*

I say nothing, not liking to entertain my audience with particular facts; in Italy we are less bigoted; we respect our priests, for fear of the Inquisition.+ We are also more sincere; because, when, publicly, a priest lives not too correctly, we say " he is immoral."++

In Ireland and Scotland I thought that, before Protestants, they would use more caution. No -safe in the obstinate blindness of their flocks, they live, in many instances, with the greatest scandal to Christianity. The Irish persist in not perceiving. " But you see some things , " " oh! it is untrue, he is a very holy man."

Were God's word read, superstition could not be maintained, many practices of their priesthood would appear as they are, designed to make miserable slaves. I promised to expose the principal superstition of Ireland, that of the Purgatory of Saint Patrick,^ one of the chief engines to

* I know by experience that some Roman Catholics in Ireland say, " if our priest look at us severely, in an unpaternal, unfriendly manner, we fear that we are going to the devil; and if he spit against our door, and give us a blow, we fear the curse of God." Fear nothing! Or rather, fear only for your pockets- for the priest will tell you, " I will look on you as a father, if you pay me for a mass."

+ There are in Italy some priests who deserve a good reputation; but, so few that, when one is found, he is publicly called "the holy man."

++ We even know by name the holy and spiritual sisters of their immorality.

^ I shall always call Patrick a great Saint, leader, and Christian patriot, very different from the Doctors Cullen, McHale, Kyle, those primates of Ireland who now act the part of despots. I repeat that the Irish are the best people in the United Kingdom for mind and Heart.

enslave the Irish mind. It is founded upon a Legend from the Roman breviary.*

This Purgatory is in the County of Donegal, on the Island of Lough Derg, which means, the Red Lake. To it throng pilgrims from all parts of Ireland, who, as they come within sight of the holy Island, pull off their shoes and stockings, uncover their heads, and walk to the Lake with crosses and beads in their hands. Ferried to the island, they first go and ask the blessing of the prior of the convent. They next proceed to the altar of Saint Patrick, at which they kneel and pray; and then walk seven times round the chapel, kissing twice the cross before it. Next they go to the seven hard stones, called the Penitential Beds of the Seven Saints, who, in old times, were the Seven Sleepers there. They go thrice round each bed, praying; kneel, praying also, before each bed; enter each bed separately, circulating it thrice in the inside, and pray : which done, they kneel inside each bed, and again pray.

They next go to several sacred stones in the midst of the lake; they pray at the first, and walk three times round it in the water; they do the same at the second, third, and other stones, always in the water. Next, they return to the chapel, and pray to the Virgin Mary, going through her psalter, namely, one hundred and fifty aves and fifteen paters. Thus one station is finished. It must be repeated thrice a day, at sunrise, noon, and sundown. This pious labour is continued for nine days, only bread and water being allowed the pilgrims. On the ninth day, generally, the prior

and heart. I am acquainted with many Irishmen, Protestants and Catholic, and I can say for myself I have found the Irish, like my own Italians, warm-minded and warm-hearted; so that I exclaim, what a pity such a people should be crushed under the feet of a Romish priesthood.

* For the benefit of the Irish present, the calculations made in lecture VI., First Course, were here repeated. The Lecturer continued thus:

In ancient Irish times, I suppose, there were only twenty-four hours to the day; consequently either this story is false, or Saint Patrick was neither founder of the Irish Church, nor the apostle of Irishmen. But we will disbelieve the tale, and believe in the glorious apostle. "Ab ungue leonem," "know the lion by his claws;" and so from one priestly superstition know all.

takes them and imprisons them in St. Patrick's Cave, without light, air, food or water for twenty-four hours, all which time they are bound to spend in prayer. On the morning of the tenth day they are taken out, and go naked into the lake to wash their bodies, and especially their heads, to signify that they are entirely cleansed from their sins. After this they have no fear of the second purgatory; because the monks, and especially the prayer-book, say that they will escape its flames, or at least, get off with a small and short penance. So efficacious is this purgatory that it not only cleanses the pilgrims themselves; but, if you pay a pilgrim to torment himself for your benefit, you may sit quietly at home, enjoying your punch and pipe, while the money you have paid him applies all his sufferings to the good of your soul, absolves you from your sins, and makes you free of purgatory in the world to come!

There is the superstition! Yet it has one good. You may ask me what. I will tell you; it washes some Catholic Irishmen, who but for it, would never wash themselves in all their lives!

Such are the superstitions by which the Romish Clergy increase the veneration they are regarded with; and, as a result, their authority and influence-from which flows the last branch of my lecture; namely, that the authority and influence of the priest makes the individual in the Popish system poor and miserable.

In that system, the people are nothing, the priests all. Worse; as I shall prove in a subsequent lecture, the people toil, and live in misery, to maintain the priesthood in luxury. Fear and persecution uphold this system. I speak practically and knowingly, for I am acquainted with all the modes practised by priests to intimidate sincere and fearless men. They persecute their victims.*

* Some time ago there was in New York a young fellow, (people told me truly talented,) who, prompted, I suppose, by his heart, spoke warmly among his fellow-Irishmen, against the tolerance, superstition, and slavery which oppress them. What followed? The priests calumniated and persecuted him, till he was obliged to fly to them, and ask their pardon. Now they support him; and he in writing and speech is their slave, a new instrument to preach papistically to his fellow countrymen. Thus do they act upon a weak heart and feeble mind.

When a Protestant, even a bishop, becomes a Romanist, the Protestant public speak of the fact once or twice, and then it is a dead fact. This I call Christian charity. But when a change of religion is on the other side, calumny, and all other bad means are set at work; in the newspapers, from pulpits, in society, everywhere, incessant persecution follows. This I call a truly unchristian and uncharitable system; calumny is the daily bread of that vicious system, as its foundation is a foundation of lies.

In conclusion, I will say something about myself. I fear only the judgement of God, and of true and impartial public opinion. I am here to promote truth, not to preach an American gospel, and afterwards an Italian gospel different from the former. I have but one gospel, and I will preach in my Italy what I now preach here. I disclaim all that appears in the newspapers as reports of my addresses; because, my English being bad, I can badly, sometimes perhaps not all, convey my meaning; and I pity the reporters. If any one will judge and condemn my mission from reading these reports, he will commit a fault against reason and logic. Wait till my lectures are published under my own authority; then, and then only, you may pass judgement on me and my mission.

I have been accused of attacking Temperance and Woman's Rights Societies, and warning my countrymen against joining them. I respect the rights of women-but their rights in the Church I cannot admit beyond the limits assigned by Saint Paul; when he is answered, I will concede that point. I firmly deny the calumnies spread by the Irish-American newspaper, and with all the warmth of my heart call their authors liars.*

But, thank God! not all are dependent on the Romish priests; not all will sell their souls to them. Thank God! there are some from Italy, and some from Ireland too, who are strong enough, and daring enough, despite all their machinations, to preach the pure gospel of Christ.

* They have imputed to me calumnies upon Irish servants in Protestant families, to deprive those poor persons of employment. Oh! coward liars, I never said such a thing! If such were my opinion, I have the courage to sustain it before this or any audience in the world. What I said was that in London, England, some Roman Catholic girls, educated in a Convent of the Sisters of Mercy to be

When a leading article and a stupid letter are written against me, and a little advertisement inserted, saying, "Do not go to hear this man who preaches against our poor Irish Roman Catholic girls," I have a

right to say before an American audience, that you, Irish-American, are a liar, a liar in support of your Jesuits, and archbishop, and Romish system, which cannot subsist without lies.

Meditate on my final conclusion. Irishmen, you work for the freedom of your country; but, remember, never shall Ireland be free while Irishmen are slaves to their priests. Irishmen, free yourselves from your priests, and you will also free your dear country!

sent as nurses and servants into Protestant families, are Jesuit females and the best of spies. It is necessary to have the logic of the Editor of this half Irish half American paper, to extract from that proposition anything calculated to warp Protestant employers against all Irish chambermaids. I repeat; I respect individuals; I have nothing to say against the Irish Roman Catholic girls or servants; but I have against girls educated at Convents of the Sisters of Mercy to be servants in Protestant families.

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