

Is Catholicism Christian?

CATHOLICISM AND CHRISTIANITY?

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Christianity, as revealed in the Sacred Writings, is salvation by Christ. It sets Him before us as at once a perfect man, the everlasting God, the God-man Mediator; who, by appointment of the Father, became a Substitute for all who were given Him. It teaches that by Him God's justice was magnified, and His mercy made manifest; that, for all who trust in Him, He fulfilled the law, and brought in a complete righteousness; and that by this alone they can be justified before God. It teaches that His death was a perfect sacrifice, and made full satisfaction and atonement for their sins, so that God lays no sin to their charge, but gives them a free and full pardon; that He has ascended to the right hand of God, and has sent down the Holy Spirit to be His only Vicar and Representative on earth; that He is the only Mediator between the righteous God and sinful man; that it is by the Holy Spirit alone that we are convinced of sin, and led to trust in Jesus that all who trust in Him, and obey Him with the obedience of faith and love, are saved, and, being saved, are made "kings and priests unto God" (*Rev 1:6*), and have "eternal life" in Him.

This is Christianity, the Christianity which the Apostles preached. But side by side with the Apostles, Satan went forth also, and preached what Paul calls "another gospel." Paul did not mean that it was called "another gospel;" but that as Satan "beguiled Eve through his subtlety" (*2 Cor. 11:3*), so some, while professing to teach the Gospel, were turning men away "from the simplicity that is in Christ;" and by doing so, did, in fact, teach "another gospel." Paul, speaking of those who were thus deceived, said, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ" (*Gal 1:6*). He means, that there can be but one Gospel, though something else may be called the gospel; and he says of those who had thus perverted "the Gospel of Christ": "If any one preach any other gospel unto you ... let him be accursed" (*Gal. 1:6-9*). He calls those who did so "false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ" (*2 Cor 11:13*); and he adds, "no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works" (*2 Cor. 11:13-15*).

Let us consider well the meaning of these passages of Scripture. Paul says that there cannot be another Gospel; the conclusion, therefore, is evident, that these teachers were not teachers of Christianity, but of a Satanic delusion.

I submit that the teaching of Rome is at least as different from that of the Sacred Writings as that which Paul calls "another gospel;" and that, therefore, his words authorize us to say that Romanism is not Christianity.

First, Christianity consists of what Christ has taught, and commanded in Scripture. But Romanism does not even profess to be founded on Scripture only: it claims a right to depart from what is contained in it-- a right to add to Scripture what is handed down by tradition; and both to depart from and add to Scripture by making new decrees. It forbids the cup to the people, for instance, in what it calls "the mass," and yet admits that it was not forbidden to them at "the beginning of the Christian religion" (Council of Trent, Session 21, chap. 2). It says that councils and the pope have been empowered by the Holy Spirit to make decrees by which, in reality, the doctrines delivered by Christ are entirely annulled. To show how extensively this has been done, let the reader endeavor to trace the full effect of what Rome teaches as to baptismal regeneration, transubstantiation, justification by means of sacraments and deeds done by us, the invocation of saints-- things which are entirely opposed to the teaching of Christ.

The canons of the Council of Trent, which sat at intervals from 1545 to 1563, may be called the Bible of Romanism. They were translated into English, as late as 1848, by a Roman Catholic priest, under the sanction of Dr. Wiseman. The Council tells us that one end for which it was called was "the extirpation of heresies." What, then, according to it, is the standard of truth? It tells us that Rome receives The Sacred Scriptures and "The Unwritten Traditions ... preserved in continuous succession in the Catholic Church, with equal affection of piety and reverence" (Session 4); also that "no one may dare to interpret the Sacred Scriptures" in a manner contrary to that "Church; whose it is to judge respecting the true sense and interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures;" nor may any one interpret them "in a manner contrary to the unanimous consent of the fathers" (Session 4).

Christ commands us to "prove all things" (*1 Thes 5:21*); to "search the Scriptures" (*John 5:39*); to ascertain for ourselves, as the Bereans did, whether what we hear agrees with what we read in Scripture (*Acts 17:11*). He commands us

to "hold fast the form of sound words," uttered by Himself and His Apostles (**2 Tim. 1:13**); to "contend earnestly for the faith delivered once for all to the saints" (**Jude 1:3**). But Rome says, "Let no one dare to do so"-- let all "Christian princes ... cause (men) to observe" our decrees (Session 16), nor "permit" them to be "violated by heretics" (Session 25). The Romanist must not dare to have an opinion of his own; his mind must exist in the state of utter prostration and bondage; he must not attempt to understand the Scripture himself. And if others attempt it-- if they dare to receive the teaching and do the will of Christ, instead of receiving fictions and obeying commands of men, which wholly subvert and destroy the truth and will of Jesus, Rome commands the civil ruler to restrain them; and, by the use of fines, imprisonment, and death, to compel them, if possible, to renounce what God requires them to maintain and follow, even unto death.

The Bible, the whole Bible, nothing but the Bible, is the standard and the rule of Christianity. To know its meaning for ourselves, to receive its teaching, to rely on its promises, to trust in its Redeemer, to obey Him from delight of love, and to refuse to follow other teaching, is Christianity itself. But Romanism denies all this; and therefore, Romanism is not Christianity.

Secondly: Christ commanded us to show "meekness" towards those who oppose us (**2 Tim. 2:25**). He says, "Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who use you despitely and persecute you" (**Matt. 5:44**).

But Romanism teaches men to hate, and, if they are able, to persecute to the death all those who will not receive it. Its deeds have been diabolical and murderous. It is "drunken with the blood of the saints" (**Rev 17:6**). It has inscribed on the page of history warnings which appeal to the reason and the feelings of all generations. Such a warning is what is told of the 24th of August, 1572. On that day the Protestants of Paris were devoted to slaughter by members of the Papal Church. For the one offense of being Protestants, thousands were slain. The streets of Paris ran with blood; everywhere cries and groans, were mingled with the clangor of bells, the clash of arms, and the oaths of murderers. The king, Charles IX; stood, it is said, at a window, and, every now and then, fired on the fugitives. Every form of guilt, cruelty, and suffering, made that fearful night hideous and appalling. Never, in any city, which has professedly been brought under the influence of Christianity, was there such a reveling in blood and crime. You may say, "Why do you recall the atrocities of a time so remote?" I answer, Because this deed received the sanction of the Church of Rome as a meritorious demonstration of fidelity to Romish precepts and doctrines. When the tidings of this wholesale murder were received in Rome, the cannon of Angelo were fired, the city was illuminated and Pope Gregory XIII and his cardinals went in procession to all the churches, and offered thanksgivings at the shrine of every saint. The Cardinal of Lorraine, in a letter to Charles IX, full of admiration and applause of the bloody deed, said, "That which you have achieved was so infinitely above my hopes, that I should have never dared to contemplate it; nevertheless, I have always believed that the deeds of your Majesty would augment the glory of God, and tend to immortalize your name."

Some say that Rome has ceased to persecute. But this is not the fact; either as to her acts, or rules of action. She asserts that she is unchanged, unchangeable; that she is infallible, and cannot alter, except so far as necessity, or plans for the future, may require; and facts are often occurring which prove that persecution is still approved by her. Rome has little power now; her persecuting spirit is kept in abeyance for a time; but it is still there. When it is free from restraint, it knows no way of dealing with difference of opinion but by the rack, the stake, the thumbscrew, the iron boot, the assassin's dagger, or a wholesale massacre. Let all who value their liberty, all who love the truth as it is in Jesus have no fellowship with such deeds of darkness, nor with those who work them. Let us show that we have no sympathy with such a cruel spirit; and that we love the names and memory of the noble army of martyrs of the Reformation; of those who sealed their faith with their blood; of those who died to release their country and their posterity from the bondage of Rome.

I agree with Dr. Samuel Waldegrave, when he says that, "The Convocation of the English clergy did wisely, when, in the days of Elizabeth, they enacted that every parish church in the land should be furnished with a copy of Foxe's Book of Martyrs;" and that it would be well if a copy of it were "in every house, yea, in every hand;" for "Rome is laboring, with redoubled effort, for the subjugation of Britain," and "the people have forgotten that she is a siren who enchants but to destroy."

Thirdly: As to the sacrifice of Christ, Christianity teaches that He was "offered once for all, to bear the sins of many" (**Heb. 9:28**); that those who are sanctified by His sacrifice are so "by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (**Heb. 10:10**); that "by one offering He has perfected forever those who are sanctified," or made holy (**Heb. 10:14**); these passages declare that the sacrifice of Christ was offered once for all, never to be repeated. But Rome declares that Christ is sacrificed anew, every time that the Lord's supper, which she calls "the mass," is celebrated; and that those who administer it are sacrificing priests.

The Council of Trent (Session 22) says, "Forasmuch as in this divine sacrifice, which is celebrated in the mass, that same Christ is contained, and immolated in an unbloody manner, who once offered Himself in a bloody manner, on the altar of the cross, the holy synod teaches that this sacrifice is truly propitiatory, and that, by means thereof, this is effected that we obtain mercy and find grace in seasonable aid, if we draw nigh unto God, contrite and penitent, with a

sincere heart and upright faith, with fear and reverence. For the Lord, appeased by the oblation thereof, and granting the grace and gift of penitence, forgives even heinous crimes and sins. For the victim is one and the same, the same now offering by the ministry of priests, who then offered Himself on the cross, the manner alone of offering being different." The synod commands the use of lights, incense, and the traditional vestments; also that the priests "mix water with the wine."

In chapter 9, canon 1, the synod says, "If any one say that in the mass a true and proper sacrifice is not offered to God; or, that to be offered, is nothing else but that Christ is given us to eat; let him be anathema."

In canon 3, it decreed that, "If any one say that the sacrifice of the mass is only a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; or that it is a bare commemoration of the sacrifice consummated on the cross, but not a propitiatory sacrifice; or, that it profits him only who receives; and that it ought not to be offered for the living and the dead for sins; pains, satisfactions, and other necessities; let him be anathema."

The Christ of Romanism is one who is sacrificed again and again for the remission of the sins both of the living and the dead; for those alive, and for those in purgatory. Is this the Christ of Christianity?

In canon 1 of its 13th Session, the synod says, "If any one deny that, in the sacrament of the most holy Eucharist, are contained truly, really and substantially the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and consequently the whole Christ, but say that He is only therein as in a sign, or in figure, or virtue; let him be anathema."

The Christ of the Bible, and of Christianity, is in heaven "at the right hand of God" (**Rom 8:34**), where "He ever lives to make intercession for those who come to God through Him" (**Rom. 8:34; Col. 3:1; Heb. 7:25**); nor will He come in bodily form to earth again until He comes the second time, without sin, unto salvation, to be admired in all those who believe (**Heb. 9:28; 2 Thes 1:10**). But the Christ of Romanism is upon the altars of Rome; He is said to be brought there by the magic spell of her priests, and to be there in the form and shape of a wafer. What a fearful blasphemy! The priest pronounces certain words, gives the solemn consecration, and then elevates the wafer. Taste it-- it is wafer; touch it-- it is wafer; look at it-- it is wafer; smell it-- it is wafer; analyze it-- it is wafer; but the priest affirms, the Council of Trent affirms, Romanism affirms, the poor victims of delusion affirm, as they bow down before it, "This is our Christ-- our God!" Here is the climax of this superstition-- it exhibits for the person of Christ a morsel of bread: Is that morsel of bread the Christ of the Bible? Is that system which declares it to be so, Christianity?

Fourthly: Christianity is in direct opposition to Romanism as to the mode of a sinner's justification before God.

What say the Scriptures? "By deeds of law shall no flesh living be justified before God" (**Rom. 3:20**). "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith, without deeds of law" (**Rom. 3:28**). "Even David describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness without works" (**Rom. 4:6**). Israel, "being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one who believes," or has faith (**Rom. 10:3-4**).

"God was in Christ, ... not imputing their trespasses unto them" (**2 Cor. 5:19**). "God has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (**2 Cor. 5:21**). "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (**Rom. 5:1**). The doctrine thus taught by Christianity is that all men are sinners; that without justification there is no hope for any sinner; that we are justified by the imputation of Christ's righteousness alone; and that His righteousness is received through faith.

Now, what says Romanism? It says that the righteousness by which men are justified is that which the Holy Spirit, by the grace of God, through Christ, makes them work out for themselves; that it is received by means of "the sacrament of baptism ... without which no one was ever justified;" that it is received "in ourselves," when we are renewed by the Holy Spirit; that it is a righteousness "imparted," "infused," "implanted," and not imputed (Session 6, chapter 7). Among the declarations of the Council are these: "If any one say that justifying faith is nothing else but confidence in the divine mercy which remits sin for Christ's sake; or, that this confidence alone is that whereby we are justified; let him be anathema" (Session 6, canon 12). "If any one say that ... good works are merely the fruits and signs of justification obtained, but not a cause of the increase thereof; let him be anathema" (canon 24). "If any one say that he who is justified by good works, which are done by him through the grace of God and the merit of Jesus Christ, whose living member he is, does not truly deserve increase of grace, eternal life," etc. ... "let him be anathema" (canon 32). Thus Romanism anathematizes the preaching of true Christianity!

I will mention but one more proof that Romanism is not Christianity, though there are many others which might be given.

Fifthly: Christianity says "there is one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (**1 Tim. 2:5**), who is at the right hand of the Father (**Eph. 1:20**), where He "ever lives to make intercession" for us (**Heb. 7:25**). Christianity says that there is but one Mediator; that we cannot draw near to God except through Jesus.

What says Romanism? I quote from "a book of devotion for every day in the month of May," published by Papal authority. "Great is the need you have of Mary in order to be saved! Are you innocent? Still your innocence is, however, under great danger. How many, more innocent than you, have fallen into sin, and been damned? Are you penitent? Still your perseverance is very uncertain. Are you sinners? Oh, what need you have of Mary to convert you! Ah, if there were no Mary, perhaps you would be lost! However, by the devotion of this month, you may obtain her patronage, and your own salvation. Is it possible that a mother so tender can help hearing a Son so devout? For a rosary, for a fast, she has sometimes conferred signal graces upon the greatest of sinners. Think, then, what she will do for you for a whole month dedicated to her service!"

Here you see that Mary is everything; that Jesus Christ is nothing. Romanism teaches also that it is right to ask the intercession of all departed saints (Session 25). How dreadful is it that sinners are thus kept back from Jesus, and are prevented from reaching God through Him.

Popery is emphatically anti-Christian! It is the adversary of Christ in all the offices which He sustains. It is the enemy of His prophetic office; for it chains up that Bible which He inspired. It is the enemy of His priestly office; for, by the mass it denies the efficacy of that sacrifice which He offered once for all on Calvary. It is the enemy of His kingly office; for it tears the crown from His head to set it on that of the Pope.

Can that be truly called Christianity, then, which is the reverse of it? Can that be fitly treated as Christianity which hates it, denounces it, and tries to destroy it? Can that be Christianity which forbids liberty of conscience, and the right of private judgment? Which commands the Bible to be burned? Which teaches the worship of saints and angels? Which makes the Virgin Mary command God? Which calls her the Mother of God, and the Queen of Heaven? Which sets aside the mediation of Christ, and puts others in His place? Which makes salvation depend on confession to man, and this is a confessional so filthy that Satan himself might well be ashamed of it? Can that be Christianity which condemns the way of salvation through faith, as a damnable heresy? Can that be Christianity which, by the bulls of its Popes, and decrees of its councils, requires both princes and people to persecute Christians? Which actually swears its bishops and archbishops to persecute them with all their might? Can that be Christianity which has set up, and still maintains, the Inquisition? That which has been so cruel, so bloodthirsty, that the number slain by it of the servants of Christ, in about 1,200 years, is estimated at fifty millions, giving an average of 40,000 a year for that long period? No, it cannot be! With a voice of thunder, let Protestants answer, "No!"

To aid such a system is to fight against God. He demands that we "resist the devil" (*James 4:7*), and have no fellowship with "works of darkness" (*Eph. 5:11*). "No peace with Rome," must be on our lips, and be in our lives. "No peace with Rome," whether wearing her scarlet undisguised, or using the cloak of a Protestant name.

The voice from heaven (*Rev. 18:4*): "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues," is proof that there may be true Christians in the Roman body; but it is proof also that even while in it, they are not of it; and that they will strive to escape from it, so as not to share in its sins.

We are informed by God that this system is the work of Satan; that his ministers are "transformed as the ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works" (*2 Cor. 11:15*); that it is he who turns men away "from the simplicity which is in Christ" (*2 Cor. 11:3*); that it is he who is the author of that "mystery of iniquity" which was at work even while the Apostles were still living, and which was to be further revealed, and to remain, till it should be consumed by Christ, and "destroyed by the brightness of His coming" (*2 Thes 2:8*); a system which is "according to the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved" (*2 Thes 2:7-10*).

May those who love God, and yet have some connection with this system, listen to the command, "Come out of her, My people" (*Rev 18:4*). May we in no degree partake of her sins: may we renounce, with a holy loathing, all her symbols; throw off, with righteous indignation, all allegiance to her corruptions. May we have nothing of Romanism in our doctrines, but contend earnestly for the pure faith of the Gospel of Jesus. May we have nothing of Romanism in our discipline. May we be subject, in all matters of religious faith and practice, to the Word of God, and to that alone. May we have nothing of Romanism in our services, in our buildings, in our forms, in our attire. Because Israel burned incense to the brazen serpent which Moses had made, Hezekiah broke it in pieces (*2 Kings 18:4*). For the like reason, let us cease to use, on person or building, that form of the cross which the Romanist treats with superstitious regard. "Come out of her."

Ye who seek salvation, go to Jesus (*Deut. 4:29; Jer. 29:11-13; Matt 7:7-8; Luke 11:9-10; 19:9-10; 1 Thes 5:9-10; 2 Tim. 2:10; 3:15*).

Him has God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour (*Isa. 9:6-7; Acts 5:30-31; Luke 2:10-14; John 4:42; Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Tim. 2:3-6; 2 Tim. 1:8-10; Titus 3:4-7; 1 John 4:14*).

He is able to save to the uttermost those who come to God by Him. (*Matt 11:28-30; 18:11-14; Luke 19:10; Heb. 7:24-28*).

The Father is ready with out-stretched arms to clasp the penitent prodigal in His embrace (*Luke 15:1-32; Rom.*

3:21-26; 5:14-21; Zeph 3:14-20).

The Son is ready to give a free, full, complete forgiveness to: every redeemed sinner, and to justify all who come unto God by Him. (*Psa. 86:5; 130:3-4; Matt 6:12-13; 9:2-8; Mark 2:5-12; Luke 5:20-26; 11:4; 23:33-34; Acts 5:31; 13:38-39; 26:15-20; Rom. 3:28-30; 5:16-19; Gal 3:13-14; Eph 1:7-8; Col. 1:13-14; Titus 2:13-14; Heb. 9:11-15; 1 Pet. 1:18-21; 1 John 1:8-9; Rev. 5:9-10).*

The Holy Spirit is ready to sanctify, renew, instruct, and help all who call upon Him (*Mark 13:11; Luke 11:13; 12:11-12; John 7:37-39; 14:16-17; 14:26; 15:26; 16:13-14; Acts 1:8; 4:31; 9:31; Rom. 14:17; 15:13; 1 Cor. 2:12-14; Titus 3:5-6; 2 Peter 1:20-21).*

The assembly of saved sinners on earth is ready to welcome you to partake of its fellowship and of its joys. (*Acts 2:44-47; 15:3-4,36; 20:32; 21:17; Phil. 4:21-23; 1 Thes. 4:9-10; 2 Thes. 1:3-5,13; 1 John 1:3; 1:7; 3:16-18; 3 John 1:3-5)*

Angels are ready with harps attuned, and fingers upon the chords, to give you a triumphant welcome, and to rejoice over you with joy. (*Matt. 18:10-11; Luke 2:13-14; 15:7,10; Rev. 5:11-12)*

Come just as you are; come at once. "Him that cometh to Me," says Christ, "I will in no wise cast out" (*John 6:37-40*). (from *Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth*)