



## The Burning Bush—Online article archive

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### The Reformers led us away from Popery, Ecumenists would lead us back -- whom do we trust??

by Rev Ivan Foster

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage", Galatians 5:1.

There can be no doubt about what the Reformers thought of Popery. Rowland Taylor was the Rector of Hadleigh in Suffolk. He was burned at the stake on 9th February, 1555. His last words to his wife and family and his wide circle of friends are worthy of note. "For God's sake beware of Popery: for though it appear to have in it unity, yet the same is vanity and Antichristianity, and not in Christ's faith and verity." Why was the good Rector of Hadleigh burned. Listen to his own words. "The second cause why I was condemned as a heretic was that I denied transubstantiation, and concomitation, two juggling words whereby the Papists believe that Christ's natural body is made of bread, and the Godhead by and by to be joined thereto, so that immediately after the words of consecration, there is no more bread and wine in the sacrament, but the substance only of the body and blood of Christ." "Because I denied the aforesaid Papistical doctrine (yea, rather plain, wicked idolatry, blasphemy, and heresy) I am judged a heretic." {Quotes from Light from Old Times -- Bishop J C Ryle}

Taylor's sentiments are but a reflection of the many similar expressions given from the stake and the gibbet by those about to seal their testimony for Jesus Christ with their own blood.

Likewise, there can be no doubt what ecumenists think about popery. They do not hold the views of the Reformers. Theologians of the Anglican Church (and that includes the Church of Ireland) have reached substantial agreement with Rome over matters such as transubstantiation. This doctrine is totally rejected by the Articles of Religion, the supposed basis of Anglicanism. (See Articles 28 and 31) This was the very doctrine which Rowland Taylor rejected and was consequently burned because of his rejection.

Methodists and Presbyterians are likewise involved in 'dialogue' with Rome. Day by day the leaders of the three main Protestant churches in Ulster may be seen colluding with popery and engaging in ecclesiastical hugging and squeezing of the most affectionate kind.

Now Rome boasts of never changing, therefore, we can assume that the Rome of 1555 was doctrinally basically the same as the Rome of today. That being so, the Reformers and the Ecumenists cannot both be right about her. Who is right in their views of Rome -- the Reformers or Ecumenists? We shall endeavour to answer that vital question in a simple fashion by examining Rome in four areas of religion.

#### I. ROME AND THE SCRIPTURES

The Christian's attitude to God's word is simple. Acts 17:11 tells us how we should treat the Word of God. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. This is a reference to the attitude of the people of Berea to the gospel. It is



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not Rome's view. In 1229, at the Council of Valencia, the Bible was forbidden to the laity. This decree was reinforced in the Council of Trent (1545-63), the most comprehensive of Rome's creeds. In 1957, the British and Foreign Bible Society premises in Spain were closed by the Spanish authorities and the stock of Bibles burned. Nothing could be clearer than that Rome is not of God, when she should have passed and enforced, right up until recent times, a ban on the reading of God's Word. Only the devil and his agents would wish to deny to Christians that which God tells them to read often and study, for it is meat to their souls and light to their hearts. It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God, Matthew 4:4. These are the words of Christ. They stand in stark contrast to the sentiments of the Roman Catholic Church.

### II. ROME AND THE SAVIOUR

What think ye of Christ? Matthew 22:42. The answer to this question divides all men into two camps. Those on the Lord's side and those not. What is Rome's view of Christ? The most common depiction of Christ within Rome is that of a helpless babe carried by Mary or a dead figure on the cross. Indeed it must be said that the form of the crucified Christ on the cross is usually grotesque and ugly. Apart from the question of such images being forbidden in the second commandment, Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments, these images do not set forth Christ in a fashion denoting His power and glory.

Again, Christ is depicted in the teachings of Rome as a stern and cruel person. The Roman Catholic is taught that it is Mary who shelters him from the avenging arm of Christ and prevents Him from abandoning them. ( See The Glories of Mary by Ligouri). Christ is depicted resisting sinners entering Heaven while Mary is the one who assists them gain its portals. Likewise Mary is set above Christ as a mediatrix. She will obtain answers from Christ which, if they were prayed for directly, He would refuse. Now all this is utter blasphemy and totally opposite to the revelation God gives us of His Son in the Bible. The love of God is in Christ, not in Mary. The love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord , Romans 8:39. Mary was just a sinner who needed Christ's saving grace as did all others born of Adam's guilty race. She says so herself. And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour , Luke 1:46-47. Mary does not provide us with a way to God. That way is found in Christ alone. Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me , John 14:6. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus , I Tim 2:5. Rome does not share the Bible's view of Christ.

### III. ROME AND SIN

The Bible gives us a very clear picture of what sin is. It is vital that we be clear on this matter. It is sin that will damn us eternally. Therefore we must not be mistaken about its



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character. Yet here again, Rome departs from God's Word. Rome claims that there are two types of sin: that which is mortal and that which is venial. The former is deadly, slaying the soul and making it liable to damnation. The latter is less offensive. The Word of God makes no such distinctions. Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law, I John 3:4. All sins will damn since they involve disobedience to God and the transgression of His Word. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, Romans 3:23. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord, Romans 6:23. The soul that sinneth, it shall die, Ezekiel 18:4. How dangerous it is to tamper with God's definition of sin. How arrogant it is for any, individual or exalted body of men, to take upon him the rewriting of God's law and that in direct transgression of His express command. Such is the arrogance and folly of Romanism.

### IV. ROME AND SALVATION

For the poor Romanist, the search for salvation brings him to the church, to the priest, to the rituals of worship and finally to himself. Whether he gets to Heaven or not, depends upon his own labours and proper use of the opportunities that his church affords him of pleasing God. It is works, works, and more works. At the end of the day the poor Romanist can never know if he has prayed enough, paid enough, or been penitent enough. How far is this removed from the gospel of Christ! He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him, John 3:36.

Salvation belongs to those who BELIEVE on Christ. Christ has undertaken to live and die and bear the wrath of God on behalf of His elect people. The gospel tells us that He has fulfilled His promise at Calvary. Whoever believes the gospel report and trusts in what Christ has undertaken at Calvary HAS EVERLASTING LIFE. Christ says in the Bible that He died for sinners. He bore their sin and suffered in their place. You believe that, don't you? He also says that whosoever will sincerely and broken-heartedly call upon Him for mercy and pardon He will hear them and answer them. Do you believe that? If you do and call upon Him then He has heard you and answered you and, on the basis of His Word, you can rejoice that you have eternal life. If you believe in Christ, the Bible says you HAVE eternal life.

A man recently heard that a ticket he had purchased for a lottery had the number that was drawn and he had won a prize of 1.8 million. (We will make no mention here of the sin of gambling.) He did not believe his friends until he saw a video recording of the draw and checked the number against his ticket. Then, he said, he jumped for joy and shouted out his delight. He did not have the money. He had not received the cheque. But he believed the report and so entered into the joy of his prize. He was rejoicing by faith.

Dear friend, God has spoken. He has said that if we believe His Word and trust His Son then we have everlasting life. Has not the believing sinner far more right and far more cause to jump and shout for joy?

I have briefly set forth the Bible's differences with Rome. They are the same differences



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that the Reformers and martyrs discovered and for which they rejected Rome. We would be disobedient to God and foolish in the extreme if we were to heed the falsehoods of ecumenists and return to that, from which God led our fathers.