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“The Word of God and the 39 Articles disregarded in the search for ‘Christian Unity’ — is this of God?”



Kilskeery Free Presbyterian Church & School

An examination of an ecumenical ‘Week of prayer for Christinaity unity’ service in Rossorry Parish Church, Enniskillen, on January 23rd 2004.

The synopsis of a sermon preached by Rev. Ivan Foster in Kilskeery Free Presbyterian Church on Lord’s Day evening, 25th January 2004.

For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, Jude 1:4.

Some ten years before this epistle was written by Jude the apostle, Paul said to the elders at Ephesus: Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them, Acts 20:28-30. Paul warned of events which, he said, would soon happen. Jude was warning of that which had already happened. His epistle marked the fulfilment of that infiltration spoken of by Paul. Within 30 -35 years of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, many of the gatherings of the followers of Christ had been infiltrated by the devil’s agents. Their objective was to destroy the witness of the gospel by spreading false doctrine from within the body of professing Christians.

God’s answer

God’s answer to the devil’s attack is seen in the words of Paul and Jude. God’s servants must act as watchmen and warn the people of God about the attacks of evil men. There is, in evangelical Protestantism, a tendency to avoid the controversy which invariably follows a challenging of falsehood and error by simply not responding to the attacks of the devil. All too many preachers claim that they are above such controversy and that they stick to simply ‘preaching the gospel’. I have to state that those ministers who do not step forward and denounce the evil lies of the devil are utterly failing their flock and the Saviour Who redeemed them. To leave off contending for the faith is to be guilty of failing to preach the whole counsel of God. In this epistle you have the dual duty of the minister set forth. He is to deal with the ‘common salvation’, verse 3. However, this same verse shows that when occasions demand it, the minister of Christ must deal with the evil attacks upon the cause of Christ by the servants of the devil. That is what we are about tonight as we denounce the actions of that wolf in sheep’s clothing, Cecil Pringle, the rector of Rossorry parish church in Enniskillen. Mr. Pringle is one of those of whom Jude warned. He is a Romanist in



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

waiting. He feels at home within the rituals and false doctrines of that false system and is happy to have a priest of that false system preach for him. In a letter to his congregation, dated January 2004, Mr. Pringle states that following his preaching on two occasions at the annual 'Novena' in the Graan monastery, Enniskillen, in March 2003, he has invited 'Father' Brian D'Arcy of that monastery to preach for him in Rossorry on Friday 23rd at a special service marking 'Christian Unity Week.' The letter indicates that this priest is no stranger to Rossorry parish since he has taken part in a number of 'baptisms and weddings' there. Mr. Pringle states that he believes that he is right in having 'Father' D'Arcy in his church to preach. It is clear that full unity with Rome could not come soon enough for him. I wish to make some observations regarding his actions in inviting this priest to preach.

I. TO ACHIEVE UNITY, MR. PRINGLE HAS SHOWN HIMSELF READY TO DISREGARD SOLEMN VOWS

This is a serious charge to make of anyone. It is even more serious to level it against one who claims to be a minister of the gospel. But I am on good ground when I make this accusation.

1. The Church of Ireland 39 Articles & Canons denounce popery as a blasphemy. Of the 39 Articles, 21 are directly opposed to popery. Canons 7, 30-31, 36 also strike at popery and direct the Church of Ireland minister to oppose Romanism.

Example

Let me give you some examples of the opposition to Roman Catholic doctrine you may discover in the foundational creed of this denomination, which day and daily walks arm in arm in ecumenical fellowship with Roman Catholicism.

"The Romish Doctrine concerning Purgatory, Pardons, Worshipping and Adoration as well of Images as of Reliques, and also invocation of Saints, is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God," Article 22. "Transubstantiation (or the change of the substance of Bread and Wine) in the Supper of the Lord, cannot be proved by Holy Writ, but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of the Sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions," Article 28.

"Wherefore the sacrifices of Masses, in the which it was commonly said, that the Priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables, and dangerous deceits," Article 31.

Here is strong and plain language by which the Church of Ireland denounces the central teachings of Rome. How can it be "right" for Mr. Pringle to have a man in his pulpit who preaches these vain inventions, these blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits? Canons 7, 30-31, 36, as already stated, also strike at popery. These Pringle must cast over in order to pursue unity.

2. Furthermore, he vowed to uphold these doctrines. In the Book of Common Prayer, there is set down what is called, "The Form and Manner of Ordering of Priests." In that liturgy are found the questions asked of the candidate for ordination and the answers they must give. There we read that the officiating bishop asks the question (I abbreviate for the



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

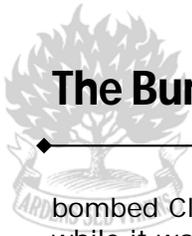
sake of space.), "Are you determined . . . to instruct the people committed to your charge; and to teach nothing as required of necessity to eternal salvation but that which . . . may . . . be proved by the Scripture?" The ordinand must answer in the affirmative. The bishop then asks if the ordinand is "ready, with all faithful diligence to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's Word . . ." Again the answer must be in the affirmative. These vows are repeated whenever a minister is put in charge of a congregation as the liturgy of "Public institution of a minister to a cure" indicates. On that occasion, the minister-elect must assent to the 39 Articles of Religion, the Book of Common Prayer and the doctrines of the Church of Ireland, which he declares he believes are in agreement with the Word of God. These solemn vows were made before God by Mr. Pringle and all the other ecumenics of his ilk. Irrespective of what he now may think of his vows, God will hold him to them. It is a most dreadful sin to vow such vows and then cast them away in order to pursue evil. "Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay," Ecclesiastes 5:5.

3. He has betrayed his people. In his letter, he tells of a "considerable number" from his Rossorry parish attending the Novena in the Graan monastery in March 2003 along with him. Contrary to all he vowed he is going to popery and taking many with him. The words of Christ in Matthew 15: 12-14 come to mind. "Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying? But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch," Matthew 15: 12-14.

II. THIS BETRAYAL OF PROTESTANT DOCTRINE BY MR. PRINGLE COMES AT A TIME WHEN POPERY HAS BEEN DISCREDITED WORLD-WIDE

1. Providence has served the nations which are under the dark sway of Romanism well. What excuse has anyone for being drawn to popery? Her priests, normally honoured and adulated world-wide, have been condemned universally for their filthiness. Her hierarchy, even the pope himself, has been repeatedly implicated in the concealment of the evil. The Observer newspaper, back in August 2003, reported on the discovery of a policy document, issued by the Vatican, urging a concealing of any cases of sexual assault by clerics. The document was issued by Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani and bore the seal of Pope John 23rd! National courts have awarded tens of £millions to victims. The Irish hierarchy, under whom 'Father' Brian D'Arcy serves, was deeply involved in a cover-up. At the very time Mr. Pringle was attending the novena in the Graan monastery, news was breaking that some 7-8 years before the Irish Hierarchy admitted that there had been sexual abuse of children carried out by Irish priests, it took out insurance against just such an occurrence! Victims of Irish priests made it very clear that they considered their leaders to be two-faced and hypocritical in their denials and cover-ups. Yet Pringle, at the price of overturning his own vows and the teaching of the Bible, would ignore this providential exposure and seek union with Rome!

2. Here in Ulster, Rome's involvement in terrorism has been well documented. The news media were filled with reports in October 2002 and again in January 2003 of the actions of a priest, 'Father' James Chesney, who was the leader of the IRA gang which



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

bombed Claudy in July 1972, resulting in nine people being murdered. It was revealed that while it was known to the police that the priest was involved in IRA terrorism, he was never arrested or interviewed. Following a private meeting between the then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, William Whitelaw, and the then Cardinal, William Conway, the priest was quietly moved to a parish in Donegal. Yet Mr. Pringle would lead his people into such a system that is stained with the blood of murdered Church of Ireland members. What we read in Revelation 18:24, speaks of the system of falsehood of which popery is a key part. "And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth." This is where Mr. Pringle would lead his people. His people should say to him: "Go to Rome if you must, but we will not go with you!"

3. The people who know popery first-hand are forsaking it, but Mr. Pringle ignores their witness. Irish Roman Catholics are famous for their devotion to their religion. Yet even they are faltering in the light of the evidence condemning their religion. The press has reported the amazing decline in recruits for the priesthood and also attendances at its services. The number of priests in Ireland has dropped to the lowest figure in 50 years. Quite recently, in Donegal, parishioners in Drumholme, were told that the Mass would no longer be celebrated there due to the lack of priests. The decline is directly linked to the incidence of paedophilia amongst priests. But even this does not deter Mr. Pringle from herding his flock in by the back door, to the system from which tens of thousands are departing in disgust by the front door.

III. THE SADDEST FEATURE OF THIS WHOLE AFFAIR, IS WHERE MR. PRINGLE AND THOSE WHO FOLLOW HIM ARE GOING

I have demonstrated that Pringle is departing from the Word of God, from the testimony and witness of the Protestant Reformation and that despite the warnings that plainly declare his folly. Just where is he going?

1. History tells us that it is back to darkness, ignorance and degradation. In his wonderful little book, "Five English Reformers", the late Bishop of Liverpool, J C Ryle, plainly describes the state of the nation before the Reformation. Dense ignorance, superstition of the lowest and most degrading description and wide-spread unholiness and immorality were the features of Roman Catholic England. It is back to such that Mr. Pringle would lead his people.

2. Living witnesses tell us that it is back to doubts and fears and misery. The united testimony of converted Roman Catholics today indicates the vexation of soul they endured under Rome's errors. There is no easing of the burden of sin by engaging in rituals and endeavouring by religious activities and good works to atone for sin. Rome's rituals have no answer for the sin-weary soul. Only the Bible, the teachings of which the 39 Articles plainly and correctly declare Rome despises, has the answer to the spiritual needs of sinful mankind. It is to Christ that the Bible points us. Not to novenas devoted to praying to Mary or the saints! "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," Matthew 11:28.

3. The Bible tells all clearly that Mr. Pringle is leading his people to a Christless eternity. Those who die clinging to Rome's errors will be lost. That, say the Church of Ire-



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

land 39 Articles, is the teaching of the Bible and the Articles are right in that statement. The only message of salvation is that found in the Bible. The Bible points to Christ ALONE. Not Mary or the saints or the sacraments or works. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God," Ephesians 2:8. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," Acts 4:12. "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. From these truths Mr. Pringle would lead his people. May God be pleased to awaken him and those foolishly following him before it is too late.