

# Roman Catholicism By Lorraine Boettner

## Chapter I Introduction



Revelation 17:4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, ...

This is a highly recommended book to share with your Catholic relatives and friends. Because the PDF file is easy to read from a PDF reader, I thought to embed the PDF file in this article to save time and make it a single article. But when I looked at it from my phone the next day, I found it hard to read. I am therefore converting it into text and dividing it into one chapter per article like I did with the series, [Antichrist And His Ten Kingdoms](#).

If you want to print this book out, you should do it [directly from the PDF file I got the text from](#). It's 402 pages in all.

According to researcher and ex-military intelligence officer, Darryl Eberhart, whose interview is in [my previous post](#), Lorraine Boettner's book, Roman Catholicism, is,

"...the best book to give to a Roman Catholic to witness to them as to the unbiblical, unscriptural doctrines and practices in the church. Lorraine Boettner, just runs comparisons. This is what the Bible says. This is what the Catholic church does or practices or says. "

### About the author



Lorraine Boettner

Lorraine Boettner (/ˈbɛtnər/; March 7, 1901 – January 3, 1990) was an American theologian, teacher, and author in the Reformed tradition. He is best known for his works on predestination, Roman Catholicism, and postmillennial

eschatology. Read more of [Lorraine Boettner's bio.](#)

# ROMAN CATHOLICISM By Lorraine Boettner

## SECTION ONE CHAPTER I Introduction

### 1 Historical Background

In our twentieth century America few among us seem to realize what a priceless heritage we possess in the freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of assembly that is an integral part of our everyday life. Nor are many aware of the bitter and prolonged struggles our forefathers went through at the time of the Reformation and later to secure these freedoms. Instead it is quite the common thing to take these for granted and to assume that they are the natural rights of all men. But truly those of us who call ourselves Protestants are the inheritors of a great tradition. And in a country such as the United States our Roman Catholic friends also share these freedoms, little realizing what it means to live under a clerical dictatorship such as their church imposes wherever it has the power.

Roman Catholics often attempt to represent Protestantism as something comparatively new, as having originated with Martin Luther and John Calvin in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. We do indeed owe a great debt to those leaders and to the Reformation movement that swept over Europe at that time. But the basic principles and the common system of doctrine taught by those Reformers and by the evangelical churches ever since go back to the New Testament and to the first century Christian church. Protestantism as it emerged in the 16<sup>th</sup> century was not the beginning of something new, but a return to Bible Christianity and to the simplicity of the Apostolic church from which the Roman Church had long since departed.

The positive and formal principle of this system is that the Bible is the Word of God and therefore the authoritative rule of faith and practice. Its negative principle is that any element of doctrine or practice in the church which cannot be traced back to the New Testament is no essential part of Christianity.

The basic features of Protestant belief therefore are:

1. The supremacy of the Bible in all matters of faith and practice.
2. Justification by faith, not by works, although works have their necessary and logical place as the fruits and proof of true faith.
3. The right of the individual to go directly to God in prayer apart from the mediation of any priest or other human intermediary.
4. Individual freedom of conscience and worship, within the authority of the Bible.

For more than a thousand years before the Reformation the popes had controlled Europe and had said that there was only one way to worship God.

That period is appropriately known as the "Dark Ages." In the church and, to a considerable extent, in the state, too, the priests held the power. They suppressed the laity until practically all their rights were taken away. They constantly pried into private affairs, interfering even between husband and wife and between parents and children by means of the confessional. All marriage was in their hands. They interfered in the administration of public affairs, in the proceedings of the courts, and in the disposition of estates. The revenues of the state built new churches and paid the salaries of the priests in much the same manner as in present day Spain. Anyone who dared resist ran the risk of losing his job, his property, and even his life. Life under such tyranny was intolerable. From that condition the Reformation brought deliverance.

One of the first and most important results of the Reformation was that the Bible was given to the people in their own languages. Previously the Bible had been kept from them, on the pretext that only the church speaking through the priest could interpret it correctly. Luther translated the Bible into his native German, and edition followed edition in rapid succession. Similar translations were made in England, France, Holland, and other countries.

Protestants of our day who have not been called upon to suffer or to make any sacrifices to secure this rich heritage are inclined to hold these blessings lightly. But the advances that Romanism is making today in this nation and in other parts of the world should cause even the most careless to stop and think. It seems that as Protestants we have forgotten how to protest against those same religious and political abuses that were common before the Reformation. We need to acquaint ourselves with and to teach the principles of our faith if we are not to be overwhelmed by a religious despotism that, if it gains the upper hand, will be as cruel and oppressive as ever it was in Germany, Italy, France, or Spain.

Our American freedoms are being threatened today by two totalitarian systems, Communism and Roman Catholicism. And of the two in our country Romanism is growing faster than is Communism and is the more dangerous since it covers its real nature with a cloak of religion. This nation has been well alerted to the dangers of Communism, and it is generally opposed by the radio, the press, and the churches. But Romanism has the support of these to a considerable extent, and even the Protestant churches in many places take a conciliatory and cooperative attitude toward it. Most people have only a very hazy notion as to what is involved in the Roman system. And yet the one consuming purpose of the Vatican is to convert the entire world, not to Christianity, but to Roman Catholicism. Its influence is being applied vigorously at every level of our local, state, and federal government. It is particularly significant that in this country the hierarchy has taken as its slogan, not, "Make America Christian," but, "Make America Catholic." And in that slogan are the strong overtones of a full scale attack upon our Protestant heritage and those precious rights of freedom of religion, freedom of conscience, and freedom of speech.

We cannot adequately understand this problem unless we realize that the kind of Roman Catholicism that we see in the United States is, for the most part, not real Roman Catholicism at all, that is, not Roman Catholicism as it

exists where it is the dominant force in the life of a nation, but a modified and compromised form that has adjusted itself to life with a Protestant majority. Here it is comparatively reticent about asserting its claims to be the only true church, the only church that has a right to conduct public religious services, its right to suppress all other forms of religion, its superiority to all national and state governments, its control over all marriage, its right to direct all education, and the obligation of the state to support its churches and schools with tax money. That this is no visionary list of charges, but a cold and realistic appraisal, is shown by the fact that in Spain, which is governed under the terms of a concordat with the Vatican, and which is often praised by Roman Catholic spokesmen as the ideal Catholic state, the Roman Church is now exercising most of these so-called "rights" or privileges.

In order to see clearly what Roman Catholicism really is, we must see it as it was during the Middle Ages, or as it has continued to be in certain countries such as Spain, Portugal, Italy, France, Southern Ireland, and Latin America, where it has had political as well as ecclesiastical control. In those countries where it has been dominant for centuries with little or no opposition from Protestantism, we see the true fruits of the system in the lives of the people, with all of their poverty, ignorance, superstition, and low moral standards. In each of those countries a dominant pattern is discernible. Spain is a particularly good example, for it is the most Roman Catholic country in Europe, yet it has the lowest standard of living of any nation in Europe. The Latin American nations have been predominantly Roman Catholic for four centuries, and today the illiteracy rate ranges from 30 to 70 percent. The veteran radio political analyst, Howard K. Smith, recently reported that "The average per capita income in the United States is eight times that of any country in South America" (March 3, 1960). The average per capita income in South America is \$280, one ninth that in the United States.

But even in those countries we do not see the ultimate fruits of the system. For over a period of years they have been influenced to some extent by Protestantism and they have been receiving assistance from the Protestant nations, particularly from the United States and England, so that their present condition, economic, social, political, and religious, is not nearly as bad as it would have been had they been left to themselves. Substantial aid has been given since the close of the First World War. American foreign aid, economic and military, granted to other nations since the Second World War through 1977, amounted to \$200 billion (Statistical Abstract of the U.S., 1978). And probably \$50 billion more has been granted since that time, making a total of approximately \$250 billion. The Roman Catholic nations of Europe and Latin America have profited greatly through this assistance.

American Catholicism, so different on the surface from that found in Spain, Italy, and Latin America, is, nevertheless, all a part of the same church, all run from Rome and by the same man who is the absolute ruler over all of the branches and who has the authority to change policy in any of those branches as he deems it safe or expedient. If he chose to give his subjects in Spain or Colombia relatively more freedom and better schools, such as are enjoyed by those in the United States, he could readily do so by directing

his priests and financial resources to that end. Undoubtedly Romanism in the United States would be much the same as that found in other countries were it not for the influence of evangelical Christianity as set forth by the Protestant churches.

## **2 Roman Catholicism a Poor Defense against Communism**

We have no hesitation in saying that most of the Roman Catholic nations, had they been left to themselves, long ago would have fallen victims of Communism. In all probability both Italy and France would have turned Communist at the close of the Second World War had it not been for American aid and all of the political influence that our government could lawfully exert toward those nations, and even then the result was in doubt for some considerable time. The Vatican had supported Mussolini's Fascist and military policies, including the conquest of Ethiopia (which conquest had been condemned by the League of Nations and by practically all of the civilized world), his open and extensive support of Franco in Spain with troops and arms, and his invasion of Albania and Greece. After Italy entered the war on the side of Nazi Germany the Roman Church supported the Italian war effort, which meant, of course, that our work of carrying the war to a successful conclusion was made just that much harder. During the war Pope Pius XII gave his blessing to large numbers of Italian and German troops who appeared before him in uniform. With the defeat of Germany and Italy those policies caused strong popular resentment. It is probable that, in the turmoil that followed the ignominious fall of Mussolini, the Roman Catholic Church would have been overthrown in much the same way that the Orthodox Catholic Church in Russia was overthrown when the Czarist regime fell at the end of the First World War, had not American military forces then in Italy preserved order. In Russia a dead, formalistic church had lost the respect of the people and had become identified with the despotic rule of the Czar since he was the head of both the state and the church. When the people rose up in anger and threw out the political government, they threw out the church with it and turned to the other extreme, atheism. That has often been the case where the people have known only one church. When that became corrupt they had no alternative but to turn against religion altogether.

In the critical Italian election held after the war, in April, 1948, the Communists made a strong effort to gain control of the government, but a coalition of other parties managed to gain the majority. Today the biggest Communist party outside of Russia and Red China is found in Roman Catholic Italy, seat of the papacy, precisely where, if Roman Catholicism is the effective defense against Communism that it claims to be, we should find the least Communism. Approximately one third of the voters in Italy today are Communist, as are approximately one fourth of those in France.

Roman Catholicism opposes Communism, of course, as one totalitarian system opposes another. And for propaganda purposes she even attempts to present herself as the chief opponent of, and the chief bulwark against, Communism. But the fact is that during the past fifteen years Communism has made its greatest gains in Roman Catholic nations, both in Europe and in Latin America, while the Protestant nations, the United States, Britain, Canada,

Holland, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, have been its most effective opponents. It is in reality only a short step from a totalitarian church to a totalitarian state, since the people have been trained to accept authority as it is imposed upon them rather than to think for themselves and to manage their own affairs.

In his very informative book, *American Freedom and Catholic Power*, Paul Blanshard, American sociologist and journalist who has written extensively on church-state relations, says:

"In several great crises in Europe the Vatican has, through passive and active collaboration with fascism, thrown the balance of power against democracy. ... It has aligned itself with the most reactionary forces in Europe and Latin America. Surely it is not by accident that the two most fascist nations in the world today—Spain and Portugal—are Catholic nations whose dictators have been blessed by the pope and are conspicuously loyal to him! The Vatican's affinity with fascism is neither accidental nor incidental. Catholicism conditions its people to accept censorship, thought control, and ultimately dictatorship" (Rev. ed., 1958, p. 291; Beacon Press, Boston).

And Count Coudenhove-Kalergi, a former Roman Catholic, says:

"Catholicism is the fascist form of Christianity of which Calvinism represents its democratic wing. The Catholic hierarchy rests fully and securely on the leadership principle with the infallible pope in supreme command for a lifetime. ... Like the Fascist party, its priesthood becomes a medium for an undemocratic minority rule by a hierarchy. ... Catholic nations follow fascist doctrines more willingly than Protestant nations, which are the main strongholds of democracy. Democracy lays its stress on personal conscience; fascism on authority and obedience" (*Crusade for Pan-Europe*, p. 173 ).

If the United States should become Roman Catholic, the result undoubtedly would be the rapid conquest of this country and the rest of the world by Russian Communism. In view of the weak defense that the Roman Catholic countries are able to put up intellectually, morally, or militarily, we are safe in saying that one of the surest ways to turn this nation Communist would be to turn it first to Roman Catholicism. We have acted as a strong restraint in keeping Roman Catholic nations from going Communist. But who would restrain this nation? There would be no other to serve that purpose, and our descent would be sure and swift.

The fact is that much of the popular support that the puppet governments behind the Iron Curtain have received has been given because they have forbidden the Roman Catholic Church to take any part in political affairs or to control the schools. In several countries, both in Europe and in Latin America, the only choice the people have is either Romanism or Communism. Protestantism, as an alternative choice, is practically non-existent. Those people have been taught hatred for Protestantism from childhood, and few of them would try it. Many vote Communist, not because they believe in the program, but because it is the only effective instrument they have to oppose Roman Catholicism.

On the other hand, to see what the effect of Protestantism is upon a people we turn to the United States, where with complete separation of church and state the Reformation has made its greatest advance, and to Britain and the other nations where Protestantism has long been the dominant religion. These we find are unquestionably the most enlightened and advanced nations of the world; and in the main it is from these nations, where the people are accustomed to think and act for themselves and to govern themselves in both church and state, that the opposition to Communism has come.

### **3 Romanism an Age-Long Development**

One of the first things that we want to point out in this study is that the Roman Catholic Church has not always been what it is today. Rather, it has reached its present state as the result of a long, slow process of development as through the centuries one new doctrine, or ritual, or custom after another has been added. Even a superficial reading of the following list will make clear that most of the distinctive features of the system were unknown to Apostolic Christianity, and that one can hardly recognize in present day Romanism the original Christian doctrines. Not all dates can be given with exactness since some doctrines and rituals were debated or practiced over a period of time before their formal acceptance.

#### **SOME ROMAN CATHOLIC HERESIES AND INVENTIONS and the dates of their adoption over a period of 1,650 years**

1. Prayers for the dead: began about A.D. 300.
2. Making the sign of the cross: A.D. 300.
3. Wax candles: about A.D. 320.
4. Veneration of angels and dead saints, and use of images: A.D. 375.
5. The Mass, as a daily celebration: A.D. 394.
6. Beginning of the exaltation of Mary, the term "Mother of God" first applied to her by the Council of Ephesus: A.D. 431.
7. Priests began to dress differently from laymen: A.D. 500.
8. Extreme Unction: A.D. 526.
9. The doctrine of Purgatory, established by Gregory I: A.D. 593.
10. Latin language, used in prayer and worship, imposed by Gregory I: A.D. 600.
11. Prayers directed to Mary, dead saints, and angels: about A.D. 600.
12. Title of pope, or universal bishop, given to Boniface III by emperor Phocas: A.D. 607.
13. Kissing the pope's foot, began with Pope Constantine: A.D. 709.

14. Temporal power of the popes, conferred by Pepin, king of the Franks: A.D. 750.
15. Worship of the cross, images, and relics: authorized in A.D. 786.
16. Holy water, mixed with a pinch of salt and blessed by a priest: A.D. 850.
17. Worship of St. Joseph: A.D. 890.
18. College of Cardinals established: A.D. 927.
19. Baptism of bells, instituted by pope John XIII: A.D. 965.
20. Canonization of dead saints, first by Pope John XV: A.D. 995.
21. Fasting on Fridays and during Lent: A.D. 998.
22. The Mass, developed gradually as a sacrifice, attendance made obligatory in the 11th century.
23. Celibacy of the priesthood, decreed by pope Gregory VII (Hildebrand): A.D. 1079.
24. The Rosary, mechanical praying with beads, invented by Peter the Hermit: A.D. 1090.
25. The Inquisition, instituted by the Council of Verona: A.D. 1184.
26. Sale of Indulgences: A.D. 1190.
27. Transubstantiation, proclaimed by Pope Innocent III: A.D. 1215.
28. Auricular Confession of sins to a priest instead of to God, instituted by Pope Innocent III, in Lateran Council: A.D. 1215.
29. Adoration of the wafer (Host), decreed by Pope Honorius III: A.D. 1220.
30. Bible forbidden to laymen, placed on the Index of Forbidden Books by the Council of Toulouse: A.D. 1229.
31. The Scapular, invented by Simon Stock, an English monk: A.D. 1251.
32. Cup forbidden to the people at communion by Council of Constance: A.D. 1414.
33. Purgatory proclaimed as a dogma by the Council of Florence: A.D. 1439.
34. The doctrine of Seven Sacraments affirmed: A.D. 1439.
35. The Ave Maria (part of the last half was completed 50 years later and approved by Pope Sixtus V at the end of the 16th century): A.D. 1508.
36. Jesuit order founded by Loyola: A.D. 1534.
37. Tradition declared of equal authority with the Bible by the Council of



Trent: A.D. 1545.

38. Apocryphal books added to the Bible by the Council of Trent: A.D. 1546.

39. Creed of pope Pius IV imposed as the official creed: A.D. 1560.

40. Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, proclaimed by Pope Pius IX: A.D. 1854.

41. Syllabus of Errors, proclaimed by Pope Pius IX and ratified by the Vatican Council; condemned freedom of religion, conscience, speech, press, and scientific discoveries which are disapproved by the Roman Church; asserted the pope's temporal authority over all civil rulers: A.D. 1864.

42. Infallibility of the pope in matters of faith and morals, proclaimed by the Vatican Council: A.D. 1870.

43. Public Schools condemned by Pope Pius XI: A.D. 1930.

44. Assumption of the Virgin Mary (bodily ascension into heaven shortly after her death), proclaimed by Pope Pius XII: A.D. 1950.

45. Mary proclaimed Mother of the Church by Pope Paul VI: A.D. 1965.

Add to these many others: monks, nuns, monasteries, convents, forty days Lent, holy week, Palm Sunday, Ash Wednesday, All Saints day, Candlemas day, fish day, meat days, incense, holy oil, holy palms, Christopher medals, charms, novenas, and still others.

There you have it—the melancholy evidence of Rome's steadily increasing departure from the simplicity of the Gospel, a departure so radical and far-reaching at the present time that it has produced a drastically anti-evangelical church. It is clear beyond possibility of doubt that the Roman Catholic religion as now practiced is the outgrowth of centuries of error. Human inventions have been substituted for Bible truth and practice. Intolerance and arrogance have replaced the love and kindness and tolerance that were the distinguishing qualities of the first century Christians, so that now in Roman Catholic countries Protestants and others who are sincere believers in Christ but who do not acknowledge the authority of the pope are subject to all kinds of restrictions and in some cases even forbidden to practice their religion. The distinctive attitude of the present day Roman Church was fixed largely by the Council of Trent (1545-1563), with its more than 100 anathemas or curses pronounced against all who then or in the future would dare to differ with its decisions.

Think what all of this means! Each of the above doctrines or practices can be pin-pointed to the exact or approximate date at which it became a part of the system. And no single one of them became a part of the system until centuries after the time of Christ! Most of these doctrines and practices are binding on all Roman Catholics, for they have been proclaimed by a supposedly infallible pope or church council. To deny any doctrine or practice so proclaimed involves one in mortal sin.

What will be next? Indications are that it will be another proclamation concerning Mary. Two new doctrines are under discussion: Mary as Mediatrix, and Mary as Co-redemptrix. Important Roman Catholic authorities have already indicated that these will be the next doctrines officially proclaimed. Mary is being presented in current Roman teaching as a Mediator along with Christ. She is said to be the "Mediatrix of all graces," and the people are being told that the way to approach Christ is through His mother. "To Christ through Mary," is the slogan. Her images outnumber those of Christ, and more prayer is offered to her than to Christ.

It is also being said that Mary's sufferings, particularly those at the cross, were redemptive in the same sense that Christ's sufferings were redemptive. It would seem that these two doctrines, if adopted, would in effect place Mary as a fourth member of the Godhead, along with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And presumably these doctrines, if adopted, will be officially announced by the pope, for he was proclaimed infallible in this regard in 1870 and therefore no longer needs the authority of an ecumenical council.

And still the Roman Church boasts that she never changes or teaches new doctrines! *Semper idem*—"Always the same"—is her motto! The fact that not one of the doctrines in the above list has any support in the Bible disproves conclusively the claim of the priests that their religion is the same as that taught by Christ and that the popes have been the faithful custodians of that truth.

The fact is that many of the above listed rites and ceremonies were taken directly from paganism or from Old Testament Judaism. Some scholars say that as much as 75 percent of the Roman ritual is of pagan origin. John Henry Newman, later cardinal, in his book, *The Development of the Christian Religion*, admits that "Temples, incense, oil lamps, votive offerings, holy water, holy days and seasons of devotion, processions, blessings of fields, sacerdotal vestments, the tonsure (of priests, monks, and nuns), images, etc., are all of pagan origin" (p. 359).

While the Roman Church has been so free to hurl the name "heretic" at all who differ with her, the above list shows that the real heretics are the Roman Catholics themselves, and that the true orthodox are the evangelical Christians. Says the Scripture:

*"But in vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men. ... Making void the word of God by your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things ye do" (Mark 7:7,13).*

*"To the law and to the testimony! if they speak not according to this word, surely there is no morning for them" (Isaiah 8:20).*

Surely the Apostle Paul knew the human tendency to add to the Word of God when he gave this warning to the early church:

*"I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking*

perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them" (Acts 20:29-30). And even more strongly: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema" (Galatians 1:8).

#### **4 Protestantism and First Century Christianity**

Ever since New Testament times there have been people who accepted the basic principles now set forth in Protestantism. That is, they took the Bible as their authoritative standard of belief and practice. They were not called Protestants. Neither were they called Roman Catholics. They were simply called Christians. During the first three centuries they continued to base their faith solely on the Bible. They often faced persecution, sometimes from the Jews, sometimes from the pagans of the Roman empire. But early in the fourth century the emperor Constantine, who was the ruler in the West, began to favor Christianity, and then in the year 324, after he had become ruler of all of the empire, made Christianity the official religion. The result was that thousands of people who still were pagans pressed into the church in order to gain the special advantages and favors that went with such membership. They came in far greater numbers than could be instructed or assimilated. Having been used to the more elaborate pagan rituals, they were not satisfied with the simple Christian worship but began to introduce their heathen beliefs and practices. Gradually, through the neglect of the Bible and the ignorance of the people, more and more heathen ideas were introduced until the church became more heathen than Christian. Many of the heathen temples were taken over by the church and re-dedicated as Christian churches.

Thus in time there was found in the church a sacrificing and gorgeously appareled priesthood, an elaborate ritual, images, holy water, incense, monks and nuns, the doctrine of purgatory, and in general a belief that salvation was to be achieved by works rather than by grace. The church in Rome, and in general the churches throughout the empire, ceased to be the apostolic Christian church, and became for the most part a religious monstrosity.

There remained, however, some groups, small in numbers, usually in isolated places, and later primarily in the mountains of northern Italy, who maintained the Christian faith in reasonable purity. There were also individuals throughout the church in all ages, usually more or less independent of the church at large, who continued to hold quite correct ideas concerning the Christian faith. But the half paganized condition continued through the Middle Ages and on into the 16th century when the religious revival in the West, known as the Reformation, shook the church to its foundations. At that time some scholars began to study Bible manuscripts that had been brought to light by the forced flight of eastern monks from their monasteries as the Mohammedan invasions extended into Europe, and these scholars saw how far the church had departed from its original Scriptures.

First there came the Renaissance, which was primarily a revival of learning, followed shortly by the Reformation. Some of the scholars in the church were called "Reformers." They called the people back to the Bible, and there they saw how wrong and contrary to Scripture was the use of images, holy water, priests saying mass, and church services in Latin which the people could not

understand. The Reformers strongly attacked the ignorance and superstition that had become such a large part of the church program, and gave the people a service in their own language with preaching based on the Word of God. Protestantism, therefore, was not a new religion, but a return to the faith of the early church. It was Christianity cleaned up, with all the rubbish that had collected during the Middle Ages thrown out.

The Reformation, under Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, and Knox, was literally a "back-to-the-Bible" movement, a return to apostolic Christianity. Evangelical Christianity has established itself as the historic faith of the first century, which came down through the ante-Nicene Fathers and Augustine, which was largely obscured during the Middle Ages, but which burst forth again in all its glory in the Reformation, and which has continued to grow and increase down to our own time.

The very name "Protestant," first applied to those Reformers who protested against the decrees issued by the Diet of Spire, implies in its broader sense that the churches led by the Reformers "protested" against the false doctrines and practices that were contrary to the teachings of the New Testament. They demanded a return to the purity and simplicity of New Testament Christianity. Protestantism did not begin with Luther and Calvin. It began with the Gospel, with the life and death and resurrection of Christ. It teaches what the New Testament teaches, nothing more and nothing less. It was not founded on the writings of Luther, or Calvin, or any of the later writers, although those writings proved helpful in the work of the church. Evangelical Protestantism cannot change greatly, for it is founded on an unchanging Book, completed in the first century and declared in the creeds of all evangelical churches to be the Word of God. The names of Protestant churches are not very old, and the denominations differ in regard to some doctrines; but the churches are in quite close agreement concerning the essentials of the faith, each attempting to hold in its purity the teachings of Christ and the apostles. The disagreement and conflict which Rome attempts to picture as existing between Protestant denominations is for the most part exaggeration, and is due largely to Rome's failure to understand what Protestantism really is.

How, then, do we know whether or not any particular system sets forth true Christianity? By comparing it with a recognized standard, especially with the Bible which is the ultimate authority. Judged by that standard, evangelical Protestantism is the same system of truth that was set forth in the New Testament and practiced by the first century Christians. All accretions, such as purgatory, the authority of tradition, the priesthood, the papacy, the worship of the Virgin Mary and the saints, the veneration of relics, auricular confession ("auricular"—pertaining to the ear—auricular confession, therefore, means confession in the ear of a priest), penance, etc., are totally without Scriptural basis and should be branded as false.

## **5 Contrast Between Protestant and Roman Catholic Countries**

It is a fact beyond challenge that the Protestant countries of Europe and the Americas have been comparatively strong, progressive, enlightened, and free, while the Roman Catholic countries have remained relatively stationary or

have stagnated and have had to be aided economically and politically by the Protestant nations. The Middle Ages were dark because Romanism was dominant and unchallenged. The light that we enjoy, which was first manifested in Europe and then in America, we owe to the Protestant Reformation. How appropriate the inscription on the Reformation monument in Geneva—*Post tenebris lux*, "After the darkness, light"!

The lesson of history is that Romanism means the loss of religious liberty and the arrest of national progress. If after living in the United States one who was not aware of the contrast between Protestant and Roman Catholic cultures were to visit some Roman Catholic countries in Europe or Latin America, not merely to see places that have been fixed up to attract tourists but to live for some time among the common people, it would make him sick at heart to see the ignorance, poverty, superstition, illiteracy, suppression of religious freedom, and legalized prostitution which particularly in Latin America is found in practically every town of any size, a fairly consistent pattern in all of those areas—characteristics of heathenism, characteristics of Romanism.

In Latin America, where the Roman Church has been dominant for four centuries with practically no competition from Protestantism, it has had ample opportunity to bring forth the true fruits of the system. And there, as a church, it has failed miserably. About 90 percent of the people have been baptized in the Roman Catholic Church, but probably not more than 10, or at most 15, percent are practicing Roman Catholics. The present writer is in receipt of a letter from a missionary in Bolivia who writes: "The Roman Catholic Church in Bolivia is not a Christian church at all but an unholy device for keeping the people in ignorance and poverty." He added that Romanism the world over is one unified system, all under the control of the pope in Rome, and that it probably would be as bad in the United States if it were not for the restraining influence of the evangelical churches. Strong words those, but he was writing of a situation concerning which we know but little in this country.

Governments in Roman Catholic countries have been extremely unsteady. Repeatedly the people shoot up their governments or overthrow them. Practically all of those countries have been ruled by dictators at various times, and sometimes for long periods of time. Since the Second World War France has had repeated governmental crises, until a more stable situation was reached making General de Gaulle president and giving him dictatorial powers. Italy has had 32 governmental crises in 25 years, usually, as in France, characterized by resignation of the government, followed by a period of uncertainty and paralysis until a new election was held or a new alignment of parties was worked out. Spain, which is often pointed to as the model Catholic state, is governed under a concordat with the Vatican, has only one political party, the clerical-fascist party of General Franco, and has been under the dictatorship of Franco since 1938. Portugal, too, is a clerical-fascist state, under dictator Antonio Salazar. In that country the fall of the monarchy in 1910 was followed by a period of economic and political chaos, with 40 governmental changes in 18 years, until Salazar became minister of finance in 1928 and prime minister with dictatorial powers in

1932, which position he has held ever since.<sup>1</sup> In the Latin American nations the overthrow of national governments, followed by periods of dictatorship, has occurred repeatedly during the past 15 years—those in Argentina, Brazil, Columbia, Venezuela, Peru, Cuba, Chile, and Nicaragua having been the most recent.

<sup>1</sup> Salazar's dictatorship ended in 1968, and Franco's ended in 1975.

It cannot be passed off as mere chance that governments in Protestant countries, such as the United States, Britain, Canada, Holland, and the Scandinavian countries, have been so stable over long periods of time while those in the Roman Catholic countries have been so unstable. The result follows in part at least because of the contrasting doctrines of the relation that should exist between church and state. Protestantism holds that the church and the state are each of divine origin, that each is supreme in its own sphere and independent of the other. Romanism holds that power comes to the state through the church, that the church and state should be united with the church holding the superior position, that the pope as God's representative on earth is above all temporal rulers, above all kings, presidents, and governors, that it is the duty of the state to maintain a political atmosphere favorable to the Roman Catholic Church, supporting it with public money while placing restrictions on all other churches, and that the state should do the bidding of the church in punishing heretics. Such doctrines undermine governments by weakening the confidence of the people in them, while the Protestant doctrines strengthen and support them.

Throughout history the Roman Church has sought to gain power from the state, but has never willingly relinquished power to the state. It has always resented paying taxes to the state, even on purely commercial properties that are owned and operated by it, and it has resented any laws requiring its priests to pay income taxes. The continual meddling of the Roman Church in politics, even to the extent of sponsoring Roman Catholic political parties where it is strong enough to do so (usually known as the "Christian Democratic" party, or a similar name, as in Italy, France, Germany, Holland, Belgium, etc.), has caused much resentment. That, no doubt, is also its plan for the United States if and when it becomes strong enough. Usually a political party is not instituted unless it can control at least one fourth of the total vote. How can any unprejudiced person face these facts and still not see the contrast between the two systems?

We behold a strange phenomenon in the world today. While people in the predominantly Roman Catholic countries are struggling to throw off the yoke of the Roman Church, Protestant countries are welcoming it with open arms and allowing it to dictate policies of state, education, medicine, social life, entertainment, press, and radio. And in no Protestant country is this tendency more clearly seen than in the United States. For 32 years, 1928-1960, one of our great political parties had an unbroken line of national party chairmen who were members of that church, and in 1960 it succeeded in electing a Roman Catholic president of the United States. Although the Constitution makes it illegal to favor one church above another, repeatedly in recent years bills have been passed by Congress and signed by nominally Protestant presidents granting very substantial favors to the Roman

Catholic Church. More than \$24,000,000 in public money has been given to the Roman Catholic Church in the Philippines since the close of the Second World War, allegedly for war damages, while hardly one tenth that amount has been given to Protestant, Jewish, and other church groups in that country. In June, 1956, Congress passed, and President Eisenhower signed, a bill giving the Vatican nearly one million dollars (\$964,199) for the refurnishing of the pope's summer home at Castel Gandolfo, just outside the city of Rome, Italy—allegedly as war damages inflicted by American air raids, although the State Department has held that this country has no legal obligation for such damages. In election years, when no one wants to vote against the Roman Catholic Church, Congress is particularly vulnerable to such pressures. But nothing was appropriated to restore Protestant churches in Italy or in the other war-ravaged countries! Those had no lobby in Washington to represent their cause.

About 80 percent of the money provided by the government under the Hill-Burton bill for the building and operation of sectarian hospitals in the United States (\$112,000,000 during the first ten years of its operation) went to Roman Catholic institutions as that church eagerly took such money, while most Protestant churches, desirous of maintaining the principle of separation of church and state, were reluctant to accept it. In various places, particularly in the bigger cities governed by Roman Catholic officials, public properties, such as schools, hospitals, building sites, etc., have been turned over to the Roman Catholic Church at give-away prices. Similar things happen in England, where, for instance, parochial schools receive 95 percent of their total costs from the public treasury—but even so, the hierarchy is not satisfied and is demanding complete financial equality with the public schools, which, of course, is fair warning of what the Roman Church would like to achieve in this country.

The hold that Roman Catholicism is able to maintain over large numbers of people, not only in Europe and Latin America but also in the United States, is due in part to its appeal to unregenerate human nature. The Roman concept of sin is quite different from that of Protestantism. Rome does not demand reform in her people. As long as they acknowledge the church and meet the external requirements they are allowed to do about as they please. In our country witness the many corrupt politicians and gangsters in our cities in recent years who have been members of that church and who have remained in good standing while continuing their evil course over long periods of time. A case in point is that of Tom Pendergast, in Kansas City, who with a large number of his accomplices finally was sent to the penitentiary. When he died the Roman Catholic priest who conducted his funeral praised him as a friend and commended his loyalty to his church, because, it was said, he had not missed mass in 30 years. It can be assumed that Roman Catholicism will remain popular as long as the majority of men remain unregenerate.

But the real cause of Roman Catholic growth and success is not to be found so much in its aggressive policy in infiltrating governments, schools, press, radio, etc., nor in its lax moral code. It is to be found rather in *the indifference of Protestants and their lack of devotion to their own evangelical message*. Modernistic and liberal theology has so enervated many

of the churches that they have little zeal left to propagate their faith. Let Protestantism return to its evangelical message and to the type of missionary zeal that governed the early Christians, and let Protestants challenge Rome to full and open debate regarding the distinctive doctrines that separate the two systems, and it will be seen that the one thing Rome does not want is public discussion. Rome prefers to assert her alleged "rights" and to have them accepted without too much question. But Protestantism has the truth, and can win this battle any time that it is willing to force the issue.

In this regard J. Marcellus Kik, former associate editor of *Christianity Today*, has written:

"That there is still a remnant of paganism and papalism in the world is chiefly the fault of the church. The Word of God is just as powerful in our generation as it was during the early history of the church. The power of the Gospel is just as strong in this century as in the days of the Reformation. These enemies could be completely vanquished if the Christians of this day and age were as vigorous, as bold, as earnest, as prayerful, and as faithful as Christians were in the first several centuries and in the time of the Reformation" (Revelation Twenty, p. 74).

Protestants do not desire controversy merely for the sake of controversy, and often shrink from engaging in it. But in this time of rising tensions certain issues must be faced. Rome continues to press her propaganda drive. Where she is in the majority she takes special privileges for herself and places restrictions on, or prohibits, other churches. Where she is in the minority she asks for special favors, favors which by no stretch of the imagination are ever given to Protestants in Roman Catholic countries, and seeks quietly to infiltrate the government, schools, press, radio, hospitals, etc. When Protestants are in the majority they tend to ignore those things. But when some major issue arises, such as the nomination of an American ambassador to the Vatican, or the nomination of a Roman Catholic for President of the United States, Protestant opposition does become vocal. A few years ago when President Truman sent the name of General Mark Clark to the Senate for confirmation as American ambassador to the Vatican, there was vigorous protest and a full scale debate was fast arising when General Clark requested that his name be withdrawn. All that the hierarchy could do was to run for cover and cry "bigot" and "persecutor" at anyone who opposed such a tie-up with the Vatican. They definitely did not want a public debate. But the result of such events is to bring out into the open the issues which normally are more or less kept under cover, and to afford opportunity for discussion of the issues on their merits.

The kind of society that Roman Catholicism has produced in other countries where it has been dominant should serve as a fair warning as to what we can expect if it becomes dominant here. What clearer warning do we need? Let us take a good look at conditions in those countries and then ask ourselves if a Roman Catholic America is the kind of heritage we desire for ourselves and the kind we want to pass on to later generations. Through the indifference of Protestants and the aggressiveness of Romanists we are in danger of losing the very things that have made this nation great.



Scripture quotations throughout this book for the most part are from the American Standard Version of 1901 rather than the King James Version since the former is generally conceded to be more accurate. Quotations from the Roman Catholic Confraternity Version are designated as such.

(Continued in [Chapter II The Church](#).)

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