

The Roman Antichrist.

By Rev. W. Maclean

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The following extracts are from "The Roman Antichrist" by the late Rev Fred. S. Leahy, converted Roman Catholic priest.

"The Romanist system embodies that 'mystery of lawlessness,' which for a time was hidden and revealed when the Roman Empire crashed in ruins, and the Bishop of Rome became Pope- the new 'Pontifex Maximus.' The people looked to the Pope as the one who had ascended the throne of the Caesars. The Man of Sin had revealed his ugly head, and thousands of God's people ever since have had the courage to point him out.

" 'All idolatries,' says Dr J. A. Wylie, 'in whatever age or country they have existed, are to be viewed but as successive developments of the one grand apostasy. That apostasy was commenced in Eden, and consummated at Rome. It had its rise in the plucking of the forbidden fruit; and it attained its acme in the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome-Christ': Vicar on earth. The hope that he would 'be as God,' led men to commit the first sin; and that sin was perfected when the Pope 'exalted himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God.' Popery is not the natural development of this great original transgression ... -Popery is, the last, the most matured, the most subtle, the most skilfully contriven, and the most essentially diabolical form of idolatry which the world ever saw. or which, there is reason to believe, it will ever see.' (The Papacy, p. 13).

"Popery is not merely a corrupt form of Christianity. As Dr Wylie points out, The Church of Rome bears the same relation to the Church of Christ which the hierarchy of Baal bore to the institute of Moses.' Papery is just Paganism dressed up to appear Christian. In Papery we behold Satan on parade 'as an angel of light.'

Vicarism.

"Popery has been called, Romanism, Vaticanism, and Vicarism. The last name is most suggestive, pointing to the real nature of anti-Christianity. The works by which the Pope denies Christ are characterised by the office which he claims for

himself, and they are developed from that office as the full-grown plant is developed from the seed. The Pope claims to be the VICAR (or substitute) of Christ, and this vicarious or substitutionary principle is basic to the whole system of the Papacy in all its varying aspects. 'Layman,' who develops this interesting thesis, says: 'A vicarious or substitutionary Christ necessitates a vicarious or substitutionary Christianity. Hence in the Papacy, the Church, its priesthood, sacrifice, sacraments and ordinances, all are vicarious or substitutionary for the Word and Work of Christ. The system is a complete supplanting of the headship and religion of Christ, and the installation of another Christ and another Christianity, instead.'

Meaning of " Antichrist."

"The Greek word, 'antichristos,' is composed of 'Kristos' meaning 'anointed,' and the prefix anti. 'Anti' means 'against,' also instead of, or in place of.' When prefixed to the name of an individual it 'indicates an agent who assumes that individual's place, and at the same time acts in opposition to him.' Thus Rome herself speaks of 'Antipopes.' Rev John McDonald says, 'Anti-christ, therefore, means one who pretends to be a vicar of Christ, and assumes to act in His name, but who is at the same time His rival and greatest enemy.' John says that 'He (the Antichrist) denieth that Jesus is the Christ ... He denieth the Father and the Son ... He confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.' (1 John II. 22; IV. 3; 2 John 7).

Let it be noted in this connection that the Papacy professes to be on the side of Christ, and yet in practice she is against Him, for she places the Pope on Christ's throne, so to speak, and asserts that 'it is necessary for salvation for every human being to be subject to the Roman Pontiff' (Decree of Boniface VIII; Bull Unam Sanctam). Rome denies Christ by adding a host of mediators, and, in worshipping a wafer, adores a counterfeit Christ! By declaring the Pope to be vicar of Christ and capable of infallibility, Rome denies the Father and the Son. Furthermore, her dogma of the Immaculate Conception of Mary strikes at the Incarnation of Christ, as set forth in Scripture. If Mary were sinless, Christ was not 'the seed of the woman,' i.e. His humanity was not true humanity: The

Roman Antichrist fits perfectly into the following description of the Antichrist by Baron Porcelli, 'The Antichrist, can be no other than this: The pretended, self-

styled, divinely appointed, Pros Christ, Vice-Christ, also the Rival-Christ, the Ape of Christ, the Antagonist of Christ, he who having no sense of, nor relish nor heart for, the things of Christ, is the enemy and adversary of Christ - the usurper, conscious or unconscious, in Christ's name, of Christ's place, prerogatives, offices, titles and functions in the professing visible Church.'

"With reference to Paul's description of the Antichrist in our. passage (2 Thess. II. 3-8.) Dr Charles Hodge says, 'This portrait suits the Papacy so exactly that Protestants at least have rarely doubted that it is the Antichrist which the apostle intended to describe.' 'So strikingly,' says Richard Baxter, 'does the Church of Rome resemble Antichrist that any one is justified in mistaking the similarity for sameness.'

Objections to Reformed View of Antichrist.

"In recent times, there has been a departure from the Reformed view of Antichrist by members of the Reformed school, and men who profess to follow the Reformers. Although not Futurists, they object:

- (1) The delineation of Antichrist in Daniel XI is of a personal nature.
- (2) Paul speaks of Antichrist as 'the man of sin,' 'the son of perdition,' and, he context would seem to favour the personal idea.
- (3) John speaks of many Antichrists as already present, but points to the Antichrist as one coming at some future date. (1 John II. 18).
- (4) in Rev. XIX, 20, the description given of Antichrist's ultimate doom has a personal element in it.
- (5) Since Christ is a person, it seems natural to expect the Antichrist to be a person also.
- (6) The Romanist system contains certain saving doctrines. "Objections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 are all answered by our statement at the beginning of this pamphlet - that in the Papacy we have a succession of men, a continuous man, so to speak. Not for a moment are we excluding the personal element. As to the last statement, we assert that although the Romanist system does contain saving truths, *they are not savingly presented*. You must take Romanism as a SYSTEM, and as such all true doctrines professed by her are neutralised by contradictory and anti-

Christian dogmas – compare her predominant Mariolatry, and doctrine of Tradition.

"Alarmed by the fact that the Reformers were pointing to the Pope as the Man of Sin, the Jesuit Ribera at the end of the sixteenth century invented. or at least propagated futuristic views of the Antichrist, and pointed to a solitary Infidel Antichrist who would appear in the dim future. This is largely the Romanist view to-day. Thus, the Jesuit Martindale says, '.... nearly all Catholic writers have expected a personal 'Antichrist,' and not one of them has excluded the idea of a personal Antichrist; not indeed, can we see how they could possibly, or (as we have said) appropriately do so. Certainly, we do not.' He describes as. 'fantastic' those who see Antichrist in the Popes!

Ribera's view soon infected the High Church party. J. N. Darby caught the contagion and finally Dr C. I. Scofield swallowed the Jesuit's pill. Thus, Ribera succeeded beyond his wildest dreams, for the attention of thousands of Protestants became deflected from the Papacy, a future Infidel Antichrist was looked for, and the historic Protestant view handed down by the Reformer⁵ was despised by many These are the hard facts of history. A Protestantism saturated with Ribera's Futurism is not the Protestantism of the Reformers - nor is it feared by the Papacy.

"The learned Dr C.H. H. Wright, in the 'Protestant Dictionary' contends that Rome is the Man of Sin but not the Antichrist. He differentiates between the two titles. Space forbids an examination of his arguments, but our position is that the Man of Sin is intensely Anti-Christian - we cannot conceive of a system or person being more so. We believe the Man of Sin to be the Antichrist.

"Let us, therefore, hold to our noble heritage, and oppose the Roman Antichrist and all his blasphemous claims - praying for and loving the people held in so terrible a bondage. Let us stand firmly for the Sovereignty of Christ with His sole Headship over the Church. Let us prepare and pray for the glorious occasion when the 'Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming,' the Antichrist, the Man of Sin, the Son of Perdition."

"*The Roman Antichrist*" or a *Study in 2 Thessalonians II, 3-8*, by the Rev Fred. S. Leahy is obtainable from The Protestant Truth Society, 184-Fleet Street; London, E.C.4. W.M.