

THE TRINITY REVIEW

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare [are] not fleshly but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. And they will be ready to punish all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled. (2 Corinthians 10:3-6)

Number 341 © 2017 The Trinity Foundation Post Office Box 68, Unicoi, Tennessee 37692 April-June 2017
Email: tjtrinityfound@aol.com Website: www.trinityfoundation.org Telephone: 423.743.0199 Fax: 423.743.2005

The Battle over the Identity of the Catholic Church at the Time of the Reformation and Afterwards (AD 1517-1820)

By Ronald N. Cooke

Editor's Note: This Review is excerpted from Dr. Cooke's Tract Twenty by the same title in his series on A Protestant View of Church History. To obtain any or all of the Tracts in the series, write to Dr. Ronald Cooke, 4927 E. Lee Hwy, Max Meadows, VA 24360.

The Protestants explained the fact that their doctrinal affiliations lay with those who had been condemned by the medieval church, such as Wycliffe and Huss, and armed themselves with a defense against catholic charges of innovation and particularity. The visible church, far from being an infallible custodian of the truth, was itself a battlefield between the children of light and the children of darkness. – D. M. Loades, lecturer in Modern History at the University of Durham

...As between the world and the kingdom of Christ there is a continual repugnance, so between the two parts of this visible church aforesaid groweth great variance and mortal persecution, insomuch that sometimes the true church of Christ hath no greater enemies than those of its own profession and company. – John Fox, the Martyrologist

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. You shall know them by their fruits. (Matthew 7:15) – The Lord Jesus Christ

(Are there any false prophets today coming to the church as sheep and yet are wolves? Or have the wolves all disappeared and no longer exist?)

All the efforts of the Roman Catholic Church since (the Reformation) have been directed to the work of Counter-Reformation—to re-establish the political and social order of pre-Reformation times.... The political and social order that resulted from the Reformation, both in Europe and America, is regarded by the Roman Catholic Church as pagan and anti-Christian. – L. H. Lehmann, converted Roman Catholic priest

Introduction: God's War

One of the greatest proofs of the almost total ignorance of a knowledge of church history is the way the word *catholic* is used today not only by the secular news media, not only by the Papal Dominion, not only by the ecumenical “non-catholics,” but even by those who purport to be defending the truth and contending for the faith. There is nothing that demonstrates the victory of the Papal Dominion in America today more than the use of the word “catholic” to describe the religion of the Papacy.

The ecclesiastical field has now been conceded to the popes of Rome and their religion. The Reformers, the Puritans, and the Protestants who followed them did *not* concede the ecclesiastical field to the popes of Rome and their false religion.

They set forth in their teachings and in their confessions of faith what the true Catholic Church was and is. Also to avoid any possible confusion with the Papal Dominion, they also set forth what this great world-wide false religion was and is. They did not pussy-foot around as the Tractarians, and the modern men who follow the Tractarians, do. They defended with Scriptural arguments their teaching about the Body of Christ, the Catholic Church on Earth, and clearly contrasted the Catholic Church with the Papal Dominion of Antichrist.

As we have already seen, the hermeneutical war of the Reformation was real then; it is still real today. The Reformation was not a study in irenics; it was a profound, long-drawn-out, polemical and hermeneutical struggle. Indeed, it can be said that the Reformation was *total* exegetical warfare. Millions of those who followed the hermeneutics of the Reformers, were killed in sieges, wars, and massacres. Yet the reason for the devil and his antichristian forces launching such lethal persecution against those who followed the Reformers was basically *hermeneutical*. It was because they sought to build their church on an exegesis of Scripture *alone!* This is what the Protestant Reformation was all about: *the exegesis of Holy Scripture!*

The *exegesis* of Scripture brought to the world the *identity of the true* Christian Church, the identity of the Head of that Catholic Universal Body of Christ, and the identity of the great enemy of Christ and His Church. Many of the great truths that the Protestant Reformers and the Puritans brought to light have since been lost. First, through the efforts of the Jesuits; then, through the efforts of the Tractarians; and now, through the efforts of those engaged in the irenic dialogues of the ecumenical movement.

Ignorance is a great evil. The Lord Jesus Christ said, “You shall know the truth; and the truth shall make you free” (*John* 8:32). Therefore where the truth is not known the worse forms of slavery and tyranny rule. Men have been conscious of the ignorance of truth in the church. For where the ignorance of the Gospel reigns, there the god of this age is triumphant. For he seeks to blind the *minds* of those that believe not the Gospel; to keep that

glorious message of truth from shining into their ignorant hearts and minds.

Even some men, enveloped in the darkness of medieval religion, could see the gross ignorance of their times. Archbishop Peckham, in his *Constitutions* of AD 1281, dwelt on the “illiteracy of the clergy” of his times and the evils arising from it. He stated, “The ignorance of priests precipitates the people into the pit of error; and the folly of boorishness of clerks, who are commanded to instruct the minds of the faithful in the catholic faith, sometimes *increases error* rather than doctrine.”

Shortly after, Bishop Quivil of Exeter, in 1287, said, “Since ignorance was the mother of all errors and ought above all to be shunned by priests, whose office consisted in preaching and teaching, each archdeacon should inquire which vicars, rectors, or priests were ‘enormously illiterate’ and report them.”

The degree of ignorance at this time can be seen by the criteria used to show what “enormous illiteracy” meant. It meant the inability “to say by heart the commandments, seven sins, seven sacraments, and the creed.” This meant that you were not considered “enormously illiterate” if you could repeat this meager amount of knowledge. It also meant that the ignorance of the Gospel was not even mentioned. Surely, according to the Bible, the ignorance of God’s Word and the glorious Gospel revealed there, is the worst ignorance of all!

Amid the plethora of electronic devices and the information tsunami of the internet there are still three great “ignorances” in North America today. 1. The ignorance of God’s inspired, infallible, and inerrant Word. 2. The ignorance of the great doctrines, and a systematic theology built upon those doctrines, derived from the Word of God. 3. The ignorance of the titanic struggle of the Protestant Reformers and those who followed them to maintain these great truths in the face of a determined demonic onslaught from hell, that was out to eradicate such truths from the minds of men. Indeed, they sailed through very bloody seas to maintain and to spread the glorious doctrines of redeeming grace to lost sinners everywhere.

As the old archbishop said, ignorance “increases error.” It certainly can never *diminish* error or

overcome error. Only the truth, known and taught, can ever diminish or overcome error.

The true identity of the Christian Church is not even known today by writers who repudiate the Papal Dominion. This disturbing fact highlights the loss of the identity of the true Catholic Church, that is present everywhere today.

The whole effort to write a Protestant view of Church history, has been, still is, and will continue to be, to demonstrate that the *Papal Dominion has never been the Body of Christ, the Bride of Christ, the Catholic-universal Church on Earth; that it is not now the Catholic Church on Earth; and that it will never be the Catholic Church on Earth!*

During the Dark Ages the true Catholic Church existed here and there where the persecuting evil system of the Papal Dominion could not extirpate it. It was mainly an underground church, just as it is in many countries of the world today.

These Dissenters *never* conceded that what they called the Great Wild Beast of the Apocalypse manifesting itself in the garb of the Papal Dominion, that was so grievously persecuting God's elect, was the Catholic-Universal-Body of Christ on Earth. They regarded it as the Mystery of Iniquity, which was present when Paul wrote his *Epistle to the Thessalonians*, and which had developed into the great falling away from the truth, and which then manifested itself in history, in the form of the antichristian Papal Dominion.

Ronald Cooke
May 8, 2016

The Identity of the Catholic Church Based upon the Protestant Reformation

One of the *main* teachings that came out of the hermeneutics of the Reformers was the truth that the Papal Dominion was not the Catholic Church. All the Reformers taught that the Papal Dominion was the Antichrist.

Today, the term *Catholic Church* is now applied indiscriminately by the news-media to the Papal religion ruled by the pope of Rome. He is called repeatedly "the Head of the Catholic Church." It is obvious that the word *catholic* needs examination; for almost everyone misconstrues its meaning today.

When teaching students about the "Catholic Epistles," strange looks come upon their faces. Indeed, some churches that still recite the Apostles' Creed have changed the word "catholic" to "Christian." "We believe in the Holy Christian Church." They do not repeat the Creed as it has been repeated for generations: "We believe in the holy catholic Church." This shows how the ecclesiastical field has now been almost universally conceded to the emissaries of the Papal Dominion.

True Protestants rejoice with the Protestant Reformers and those who followed them and marvel at their grace and power in *never* conceding the ecclesiastical, soteriological, eschatological, and indeed the historical field, to the Jesuits of Rome. They stayed on these exegetical battle fields, wielded the sword of the Spirit, waged a good hermeneutical warfare, and remained at their posts through some of the worst times of church history to win their theological war. Their weapons were not carnal but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.

Up until Vatican II, the Papal Dominion called itself the Roman Catholic Church. After Vatican II the word *Roman* was dropped, and the pope and his Papal Dominion sought to steal the name of the true church of God's elect and give it to their false religion.

Since then the term *Catholic Church* has become synonymous with the Papal Dominion; and the antichristian pope is now everywhere addressed as the head of the Catholic Church. It was a masterstroke of the devil to try to take the name of the true Body of Christ, dethrone Christ as the true Head of His universal Church, the home of God's elect, and give it all to Antichrist.

The efforts of the Protestant Reformers and the Puritans in dismissing the pope as the head of the true church and identifying him and his apostate religion as Antichrist were, at one time, widely known throughout Protestant Churches and beyond them. Their exegesis was later attacked by the Jesuits so successfully, that it is virtually unknown in what are still called "Bible-believing" circles today.

The ignorance of Protestant history is monumental today. The hermeneutical labors of the Reformers and the Puritans to showcase the

Scriptural basis of the true Catholic Church on Earth, have been eclipsed by the Jesuits, repudiated by the Tractarians, ignored by evangelicals, so as to become virtually unknown in the “non-Papal” churches and academia today. At one time such truths were universally known in Protestant Churches and were adopted into their creeds, which still exist today.

Cardinal Manning, during the Tractarian era in England, said that few Protestants then knew anything about their creeds. This was true a hundred and twenty years ago. It is so much worse now than then. The ignorance of the creeds of Protestantism is now almost total. Yet at one point in history, millions subscribed to the creeds of Protestantism. In the following pages we will look at excerpts from the writings of some of the Reformers, then at relevant passages from the different creeds of Protestant churches, and finally at the argument from church history, all in order to establish what constitutes the true church of God’s elect, headed up by the Lord Jesus Christ, in contrast to the enduring deception and corruption of the Papal Dominion.

Martin Luther

Early on in his ministry, Luther began to have questions about the Papal Dominion in which he was laboring. He began to criticize certain errors and practices in the only “church” he had ever known. He had very little in the way of a precedent to follow. He was feeling his way along step by step.

In his early work, *The Papacy in Rome*, he leveled certain accusations against the Papacy. In his later writings he would become much more convinced of the evils in the Papal System. Finally, he came to regard the whole Papal Dominion as the antichrist.

Luther, in his debate with Eck made some points early on in his ministry against the pope as the Head of the Church.

Eck claimed, “There is in God’s Church a primacy derived from Christ Himself. The Church militant has been set up in the likeness of the Church triumphant. But this latter is a monarchy, wherein everything ascends hierarchically to its sole head – God Himself. Therefore it is that Christ has

established a similar order upon earth. How monstrous would the Church be without a head.”¹

Luther, turning to the assembly stated, “When the doctor declares that it is most needful that the Church universal have a Head, he says well. If there be any one among us who affirms the contrary, let him stand forth. I hold no such thing.”

Eck: “If the Church militant has never been without its one Head, I would beg to ask who he can be, but the Roman Pontiff?”

Luther, raising his eyes to Heaven stated, “The Head of the Church militant is Christ himself, and not a mortal man. I believe this, on the authority of God’s testimony, whose word says, ‘He must reign until his enemies be put under his feet.’ Let us then no longer give ear to those who put away Christ to the Church triumphant in heaven. His kingdom is a kingdom of faith. We see not our Head, and yet we are joined to him.”

Eck, not discomfited but turning to other arguments, resumed, “It is from Rome, as St. Cyprian tells us, that sacerdotal unity proceeded.”

Luther: “As regards the Western church, agreed. But is not this Roman Church herself derived from that of Jerusalem? And to speak correctly, the church of Jerusalem was mother and nurse of all the churches.”²

Eck: “St. Jerome affirms, that if authority above that of all other churches is not lodged with the pope, there will be in the Church as many schisms as there are bishops.”

Luther: “I admit it, that is to say, that if all the faithful were consenting, this authority might, agreeably to the principles of human legislation, be rightfully ascribed to the chief Pontiff. Neither would I deny that if the whole body of believers should consent to acknowledge as first and chief bishop—the bishop of Rome, or of Paris, or of Magdeburg, it would be our duty to acknowledge him as such,—from respect to this general consent of the whole church: but that is what the world has never seen nor ever will see. Even in our own day, does not the Greek church withhold her consent to Rome?”

¹ D’Aubigne, J. H. Merle, *History of the Reformation*, Vol. II, New York: Robert Carter, 1843, 47.

² D’Aubigne, 48.

As Eck appealed to the authority of the Fathers, Luther resolved to defeat him by the Fathers themselves. “That my construction of the word,” said he, “is truly what St. Jerome intended, I will prove by his own epistle to Evagrius. ‘Every bishop,’ says he, ‘whether of Rome or of Eugubium, whether of Constance or of Regium, whether of Alexandria or of Thanis, has the same honour and the same priestly rank. The influence of wealth, or the humility of poverty alone, makes their difference of standing.’”

From the Fathers, Luther passed to the decrees of the Councils, which recognize in the bishop of Rome only the first among his peers. “We read,” said he, “in the decree of the Council of Africa, ‘Let not the bishop of the chief See be called Prince of the Pontiffs, or Sovereign Pontiff, or any other name of that sort, but simply bishop of the first See.’ If the monarchy of the bishop of Rome were of divine right,” continued Luther, “would not this decision be heretical?”³

Eck at this time realized he was up against someone who knew the early writers better than he did. So he then resorted to a different tactic. He thought he would tie Luther’s position into the heretics of the Middle Ages. He said, “Did not the Bohemians deny the primacy of the Supreme Pontiff? The doctor (Luther) has recalled these heretics to my recollection. His inferences which he has drawn are entirely favorable to their errors.”⁴

Eck definitely played to the gallery here, for a great round of applause broke forth from his partisan supporters after he linked Luther to the heretics. Luther replied that he did not love schism and the Bohemians were wrong in separating from the Church. At this time Luther had not advanced far on his pilgrimage. He would later openly support the Bohemians.

This took place during the morning session of the debate. It broke up for lunch. Some believe that his friends told him that he had gone too far in condemning the Bohemians. So at two o’clock in the afternoon the debate resumed. Luther broke the silence by saying clearly, “Among the articles of John Hus and the Bohemians, there are some that are most agreeable to Christ. This is certain. There

is only *one* church universal. And again: That it is not necessary to salvation that we should believe the Roman church superior to others. It matters little to me whether Wyclif or Hus said it. It is the truth.”⁵

This caused an even greater uproar. Duke George said that Luther was mad. From that moment on he was the enemy of Luther. Other subjects were debated but none surpassed the one on the pope’s primacy for interest and dissension. D’Aubigne said the debate “inflicted an open wound on the Papacy.” Luther closed the debate by observing that Eck avoided the Holy Scriptures as a devil flees from the cross, adding, that he preferred the authority of the Word of God with all due respect for the fathers.

In speaking of the claim to universal power on the part of the pope, Luther says, “Let a layman ask such Romanists and let them answer why they despoil and mock all the divine orders and rant so violently about this power, though they cannot show at all why it is necessary or what it is good for. For ever since it has arisen, papal power has accomplished nothing but the devastation of Christendom, and no one is able to show anything good or useful that has resulted from it.”⁶

Luther says, that for the benefit of the blockhead (that is the man he is answering) and for those led astray by him, he must speak bluntly.

“The Scriptures speak of the church quite simply and use the term in only one sense... according to the Scriptures, the church is called the assembly of all believers in Christ on earth... This community or assembly consists of those who live in true faith, hope, and love. As Paul says in Ephesians 4:5, ‘One baptism, one faith, one Lord,’ though they be a thousand miles apart in one body. Yet they are called an assembly in spirit because each one preaches, believes, hopes, loves, and lives, like the other... This really means a spiritual unity, and because of it men are called a communion of saints. This unity of itself is of itself sufficient to make a church, and without it no unity, be it of place, of time, of person, of work, or of whatever else, makes a church.”⁷

⁵ D’Aubigne, 52.

⁶ Luther, Martin, *Select Writings of*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967, Vol. I, 207.

⁷ Luther, 211.

³ D’Aubigne, 49.

⁴ D’Aubigne, 51.

Luther then considers the subject of the Head of the church. He says first, that, “The true church may not and cannot have a head on earth, and no one on earth, neither bishop nor pope can rule over it. Only Christ in heaven is the head and He rules alone.”⁸ He continues:

In the second place, it is proved by the nature of the head. For in the nature of every head joined to a body, it infuses life and feeling and activity into all its members.

Now, no man can instill into the soul of another, or into his own soul, true faith and the mind, will, and work of Christ, but Christ himself must do this. For neither pope nor bishop can produce in a man’s heart faith or anything else a Christian member should have. But a Christian must have the mind and will which Christ has in heaven, as the Apostle says in I Corinthians 2:16, 3:23. It may also happen that a Christian member has the faith which neither pope nor bishop has, how then can the pope be his head? ...

Who has ever seen a live animal with a lifeless head? The head must give life to the body, therefore it is clear that on earth there is no other head of the spiritual church but Christ alone. Moreover, if a man were its head here below, Christendom would perish as often as a pope dies, for the body cannot live when the head is dead.⁹ ...

St. Paul stands strong and immoveable in Ephesians 4:15-16 giving to Christendom but one head and saying, “Let us be true Christians and grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ from whom the whole body joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love....”

Thus it is clear that the holy church is not bound to Rome, but is as wide as the world. The assembly of those of one faith, a spiritual and not a bodily thing.¹⁰

He then gives his opponent an elementary lesson in logic.

You argue your major premises, which no one questions, and assume the correctness of your minor premises, which everyone questions, and then you draw the conclusions to suit yourself.

Listen to me, and I will give you a better lesson in logic. I agree with you in saying that everything that is typified by the high priest in the Old Testament must be fulfilled in the New, as Paul said in I Corinthians 10:6. Thus far we agree. Now you continue: St. Peter or the pope was typified by Aaron. I say no. What can you do then? On what foundation have you built: on your own dreams, and yet you boast you will argue against me with the Scriptures?¹¹

The “learned Romanist” who was debating with Luther had claimed that the pope was a type of Christ. Luther answered him.

I say that Aaron was a type of Christ and not the pope.... In the first place Christ is a spiritual priest for the inner man, for He sits in heaven and makes intercession for us as a priest, teaches us inwardly and does everything a priest should do in mediating between God and man, as St. Paul says in Romans 3:24-25, and in the whole epistle to the Hebrews Aaron is the type....

Second in order not to bring my own thoughts I have the passage from Psalm 110:4, “The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind, you are a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedek.” Can you cite a passage like that about St. Peter? Or the pope? For, I think that you will not deny that this passage refers to Christ...and in many other places.... Thus we see how beautifully the Romanists treat the Scriptures and make out of them what they like, as if they were a nose of wax to be pulled around at will.¹²

Again Luther says,

⁸ Luther, 215.

⁹ Luther, 212.

¹⁰ Luther, 221.

¹¹ Luther, 214-216.

¹² Luther, 214-216.

We have proved from the Scriptures that Christ is the high priest of the New Testament. Clearer still is Paul's comparison of Aaron and Christ in Hebrews 9:6-12 where he wrote, "the priests go continually into the outer tent, performing their ritual duties, but into the second only the high priest goes, and he once a year, and not without taking blood which he offers for himself and for the errors of his people. By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the sanctuary is not yet opened as long as the outer tent is still standing.... But when Christ appeared as high priest of the good things to come, then through the greater and more perfect tent not made with hands, that is, not of this creation, he entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood thus securing an eternal redemption."

What say you to this, my learned Romanist? Paul says the High-Priest typified Christ, you say St. Peter. Paul says Christ entered not into a temporal building; you say he is in the temporal building in Rome. Paul says Christ entered once and obtained eternal redemption, and Paul makes the type to be altogether spiritual and heavenly, while you make it to be earthly and external. What can you do now?¹³

In his later studies on popedom as he called it, he set forth thirty reasons why the books of the pope were burned. Here are some of these reasons:

Articles and Errors in the Canon Law and Papal books on account of which they are rightly to be burned and shunned.

Next to God the salvation of all Christendom depends on the pope.

The statement, "I believe in one holy church, etc." is opposed to this. All Christians, then, would have to perish as often as the pope is wicked.

The rock on which Christ builds his church, Matthew 16:18, is called the Roman See, although Christ alone is that very rock, I Corinthians 10:4. No one on earth can judge the

pope, also no one can judge his decision; rather he is supposed to judge all people on earth.

This is the main article. In order that it may become deeply imbedded, it is always quoted again and again through many chapters and almost through the whole canon law, so that it indeed appears as though the canon law were devised only in order that the pope could freely do and leave what he wished. If this article stands, then Christ and His Word are defeated. But if it does not stand then the whole canon law, together with the pope and See, are defeated.

He holds to be true and fosters the great unchristian lie that Emperor Constantine has given him Rome, land, empire, and power on earth.

Against this Christ says, Matthew 6:19, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth;" likewise, "You cannot serve God and mammon," Matthew 6:24.

No one who is married is able to serve God, even though Abraham and many saints have been married and God himself established marriage without a doubt. Thus the Antichrist again rises above God.¹⁴

...

Luther said the mark of a standing or falling church was the article of justification by faith alone. Philip Schaff with others disagreed here with Luther. However, the Bible agrees with Luther. Luther came to see that justification by faith alone was the entrance into Christ and into His church.

Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God. Augustine wrote of the need of vivifying grace, the grace that makes a dead sinner come alive to God. As far as Adam's helpless race is concerned justification by faith alone is the key truth. For nothing else registers until a man is justified by faith alone in the finished work of Christ.

The Papal Dominion is a dead dominion. There is no life there. It does not matter how many great tomes men have written about God, a world view, the Church, or about Christ; all such works have the marks of a dead sinner. A man who is personally dead to the truth, dead to Christ, and dead to the grace of God, cannot write anything but dead work.

¹³ Luther, 226-227.

¹⁴ Luther, Martin, *Select Writings of*, Vol. II, 61-67

According to the Word, the Adamic race is dead in trespasses and sins. So until a person comes out of this state of death, nothing else matters. For until a dead sinner has peace with God he remains under the wrath of God. So it does not matter what he writes about God or about a world view; for, even if he were to get some things correct, it would do him no good personally. He would still be under the wrath of God and lost forever. A justified man may learn many things about the Divine Trinity and about a world view arising from that Divine Trinity, but he will never know such truth until he is justified. For before his justification he is spiritually dead—dead to the truth, dead to God, and dead to the Church. A good personal friend of mine learned the *Shorter Catechism* by heart and was able to repeat all the answers so as to win a reward for his diligence. Yet just a few years later he became a Mormon and has languished ever since in that most pathetic of all cults, where a man can read hieroglyphics by putting on magic spectacles. My friend learned many great theological truths while learning the *Catechism*, but he was never justified by faith alone in the finished work of Christ; so all the learning went past him, for he was still dead in trespasses and sins.

Luther was looking at the church from the standpoint of man. He rightly saw that until a man was saved by grace, he knew nothing about the grace that saves. He remained dead to grace. However, when a man was justified he immediately had peace with God, and therefore began to understand truths about God that would enable him to build a good world view. Schaff said Christ was the mark of a standing or falling church. But surely Luther understood that. He reveled in being justified by faith and having peace with God *through our Lord Jesus Christ*. He recognized surely, as well as any man who ever lived, that Christ alone was the one who justified the believing sinner. Luther's eyes were opened when he read that "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes." The justified man will hunger and thirst for righteousness and his pursuit of sanctification, but he cannot do that until he is justified by the merits of Christ's righteousness alone. The justified man will learn many truths, but he will learn none that affect him until he is justified. The saved man

will learn many truths about the grace that saved him, but he will learn none until he is saved by grace alone.

Luther looked at the Papal Dominion in which he himself was reared, and he saw nothing but a system of works religion that clearly spelled out *death* rather than life. The whole edifice of the Papal Dominion was a mausoleum of death. The parade of human inventions had brought death not life to those who entered her doors. A litany of liturgy and sacraments produced nothing but spiritual death. Luther looked at them all and concluded it was all pretense.

The very statuary and images and relics—dead men's bones—all spoke of lifelessness and spiritual darkness. The statues did not breathe. The relics did not breathe. Dead saints, heads, and statues did not breathe. All the art and all the architecture gave off the pallor of death and lifelessness. Even though millions of pages were written about such things by thousands of men, even though millions of people bowed and scraped before the lifeless images, there was nothing but death and darkness. Holy water may have been splashed here and there, but it gave no life to anything or anybody.

The very Mass, the central object of worship, was a dead thing. Here, men calling themselves priests of a false religion moved about an altar of sacrifice holding up a piece of bread and calling it god, and anathematizing all who denied that it was god and that it deserved to be worshiped as god. All this abominable practice was nothing but the exclamation point of death. A dead god, a dead statuary, dead images, dead relics, and to crown this sepulchral setting, the promise of punishment in purgatory, a dead place that exists in minds deadened to the truth that could save them from such a litany of death—the *vivifying power of the message of the glorious Gospel*. "That through this man Jesus is preached unto us the forgiveness of sins so that all who believe can now be justified from all things that they could not be justified under the law of Moses."

The Lord Jesus Christ, when *believed, justifies* the helpless child of Adam and gives him or her peace with the living God and the pure holy and perfect righteousness of Christ, imputed to him by faith alone. This is why Luther cried out that

justifying faith is the article of a standing or falling church, because it gave *life* to the *dead* and brought every other truth it is possible to know into focus and into the possibility of knowing. Luther realized *life from the dead* was primary; everything else as far as Adam's helpless race *followed*; it did not *precede* the necessary giving of *life* to the *dead*. Augustin's *vivifying* Word preceded everything else as far as sinful man is concerned. Luther said,

We can understand the heavy temptations of that everlasting predestination, which terrifies many people, nowhere better than from the wounds of our Saviour, Christ Jesus, of whom the Father commanded, saying: "Him shall ye hear." But the wise of the world, mighty, the high-learned, and the great, by no means heed these things, so that God remains unknown to them, notwithstanding they have much learning, and dispute and talk much of God; for it is a short conclusion: Without Christ, God will not be found, known, or comprehended.

If now thou wilt know, why so few are saved, and so infinitely many damned, this is the cause: the world will not hear Christ; they care nothing for him, yea, condemn that which the Father testifies of him: "This is my well-beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Whereas all people that seek and labor to come to God, through any other means than only through Christ (as Jews, Turks, Papists, false saints, heretics, &c.), walk in horrible darkness and error; and it helps them nothing that they lead an honest, sober kind of life, affect great devotion, suffer much, love and honor God, as they boast, &c. For seeing they will not hear Christ, or believe in him (without whom no man knows God, no man obtains forgiveness of sins, no man comes to the Father,) they remain always in doubt and unbelief, know not how they stand with God, and so at last must die, and be lost in their sins. For, "He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father," (I John, ii.) "He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains upon him." (John, iii.)¹⁵

...

The Creeds of Protestantism

The more I study the exegesis of the Protestant Reformers, the more I realize the errors I was taught in college and seminary not only about eschatology, but also about church history. The importance of Church History cannot be overemphasized. I was basically taught a church history where the antichristian popes were said to be the head of the Catholic Church, when indeed, they were no such thing. The Catholic Church is the universal *body of Christ* over which Christ *alone* is the *head*, and indeed the *fullness* that fills all in all.

Christ's *body* is the true universal-catholic church on Earth. The Papal Dominion is the historical development of the Mystery of Iniquity that has been at work in the Church since Paul wrote to the Thessalonians; certainly it is not the Body of Christ.

The great hermeneutical revolution brought about through the ministry of the Reformers was only achieved amid the most brutal massacres, persecution, and inquisition unleashed upon them and their followers by the minions of the Papal Dominion. Princes, like William I, of Orange, were assassinated. Countries were invaded and brutal massacres carried out in an attempt to halt the spread of the hermeneutical upheaval. It was military warfare and military tactics carried out against a theological and exegetical blitzkrieg. The sheer amount of Bibles, and portions of Scriptures, translated into the languages of different nations and printed across Europe, was simply unstoppable by military conquest, massacre, and bloodshed. The weapons of the Reformers were not carnal but mighty through God to the pulling down of the strongholds of the Papal Dominion.

The Papal Dominion had to rely on physical and military force to try to stop the spread of Biblical exegesis. It was a war they could not win. It was the lack of Biblical exegesis that was the downfall of all papal claims. The Papal Dominion *claimed* it was the Catholic Church. This claim was not based on Biblical exegesis, but rather on ecumenical councils, forged manuscripts, trickery, intrigue, conspiracy, and force.

In trying to write a basic outline of church history, it is impossible to do it without looking at

¹⁵ Cooke, Ronald, *Best of Luther's Table Talk*, self-published, 29-30.

the issue of exegesis and theology. History is not theology. Yet history (that is history looked at from a Christian standpoint and not the atheistic standpoint of evolution) cannot be written without paying close attention to theology. For as we were taught in Sunday School, history is simply *His* (Christ's) *story*. Indeed, apart from Christ, and all the theological truths that arise from His Person, His Work, and His Word, it is *impossible* to write a true Protestant history of the Christian Church.

The exegesis of the Protestant Reformers carefully expounded the written Word. They believed that the written Word was the *only* authority for faith and practice in the Church. Following the Reformation various Protestant churches put out their confessions of faith. They all dealt with the doctrine of the Church and the true Head of the church. There was no confusion generated as to what comprised the Church and who was the *only* Head of the Church. ...

The Irish Articles of Religion, AD 1615

“Agreed upon by the Archbishops and Bishops and rest of the Clergy in Ireland, in the Convention holden at Dublin in the Year of our Lord God 1615, for Avoiding of Diversities and Opinions and the Establishing of Consent touching true religion.” The article on the head of the church reads:

The Bishop of Rome is so far from being the supreme head of the universal Church of Christ, that his works and doctrine do plainly discover him to be that Man of Sin, foretold in the Holy Scriptures, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of His mouth and abolish with the brightness of His coming.

The Baptist Confession of 1688

This is the most generally accepted Confession of the Regular Baptists in England and in the Southern States of America. It appeared first in London, 1677, then again in 1688 and 1689 under the title “*The Confession of Faith* put forth by the elders and Brethren of many congregations of Christians baptized upon their profession of their faith in London and the Country.” (It was adopted by the Philadelphia Association of Baptist churches and

hence is also called the *Philadelphia Confession of Faith*.) Article 4 of the Baptist Confession reads:

The Lord Jesus Christ is head of the Church, in whom, by appointment of the Church, in whom, by appointment of the Father, all power for the calling, institution, order and government of the Church is invested in a supreme and sovereign manner; neither can the Pope of Rome, in any sense, be head thereof, but is no other than Antichrist, that Man of Sin, and son of perdition, that exalts himself above all that is called God; whom the Lord shall destroy with the brightness of His coming.

Confessio Fidei Scotianae II – Scottish Confession and National Covenant, AD 1580

The introduction to this confession states

And therefore we abhorre and detest all contrite religion and doctrine, but chiefly all kynde of papistrie in general and particular heads, even as they ar now damned and confuted by the Word of God and Kirk of Scotland. But in special, we detest and refuse the usurped authoritie of that Romane Antichrist upon the Scriptures of God, upon the Kirk, the civil magistrate, and consciences of men; all his tyrannous laws made upon indifferent things againis our Christian libertie. His erroneous doctrine against the sufficiencie of the written word, the perfection of the law, the office of Christ, and His blessed Evangell.

His corrupted doctrine concerning originall sinne, our natural inhabilitie and rebellion to God's law, our justification by faith onlie, our imperfect sanctification and obedience to the law...his five bastard sacraments; with all his rites, ceremonies, and false doctrine.... His blasphemous opinion of transubstantiation.... His blasphemous priesthood; His prophane sacrifice for the sinnis of the deade and the quicke: his canonization of men, worshipping of imagerie...his purgatory, prayers for the dead; his multitude of

advocates or mediators, with manifold orders, and auricular confessions. His justification by works; works of supererogation, merits, pardons, peregrinations, and stations; his holie water, baptism of babes, his wardlie monarchie and wicked hierarchie.... His erroneous and bloodie decrees made at Trente, with all the sybcrivars and approvers of that cruell and bloodie Band conjured againis the Kirk of God.

...
The *Westminster Confession of Faith* is also very clear as to what the true Church is, and who is its only Head. Chapter xxv “Of the Church” states

I. The Catholic or universal church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ the head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.

II. The visible church, which is also catholic or universal under the gospel consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children; and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God; out of which there is no salvation.

III. Unto this catholic visible church Christ has given the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints in this life, to the end of the world; and does by His own presence and Spirit, according to His promise, make them effectual thereunto.

IV. This catholic church has been sometimes more, sometimes less visible. And particular churches which are members thereof, are more or less pure, according as the doctrine of the gospel is taught and embraced, ordinances administered, and public worship performed more or less purely in them.

V. The purest churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error; and some have so degenerated as to become no churches of Christ; but synagogues of Satan. Nevertheless, there shall always be a church on earth to worship God according to His will.

VI. There is no other head of the church but the Lord Jesus Christ; nor can the Pope of Rome in any sense be head thereof; but is that antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalts himself in the church against Christ; and all that is called God.

All these Confessions set forth the clear teaching of the Bible concerning the Headship of Christ, and His Body which is the universal-catholic Church militant on Earth, and in Heaven triumphant. They all carefully distinguish the great antichristian body of the Papal Dominion from the true church, so that none can possibly be deceived into thinking the Roman Catholic system is the catholic church. ...

Bible Protestants of the past knew what they believed about the Church, the Body of Christ, and its *only* true Head. They also knew that the pope was not the head of the Catholic or universal Church, but that this was only his blasphemous and false claim—to be its head. Obviously millions of self-proclaimed Bible-believers today have no such knowledge. ...

Some “Bible-believers” have now learned the tricks of the trade from the Jesuits, and engage in deception to help the cause of the Papal Antichrist in the modern world. The truth of the Christological war is now *excised, expurgated, or removed* from the writings of past Protestants by self-proclaimed Bible believers. So the Jesuits do not have to work nearly as hard as they once did in Protestant America. Now, in once-Protestant America the “non-Catholics” do the work for them. The classic example of such an expurgation can be seen in what the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association did to Halley’s *Bible Handbook*.

One of the more glaring cases of ecumenical expurgation of material damaging to the Papal Dominion, was the re-issuing of 750,000 copies of

Halley's *Bible Handbook* by the Billy Graham Association in 1964. About forty pages of Halley's original work were removed. The forty pages selected for removal bore testimony to the evil teachings, persecutions, and massacres of the Papal Dominion in the Dark Ages, when men viewed this wicked dynasty of the popes as Antichrist.

Halley concluded this section of his work, with these words:

The story of the Papacy has been written as a background to the Reformation, in the belief that we ought to be familiar with the Wherefore of the Protestant Movement and the Historical Foundations of our Protestant Faith. Some of the things told herein seem unbelievable. It seems inconceivable that men could take the religion of Christ and develop it into an unscrupulous Political Machine on which to ride to world power. However, all statements made herein may be verified by reference to any of the complete Church Histories.¹⁶

This section of Halley's book was deceptively removed by the Billy Graham Association before it sent out hundreds of thousands of copies of its own bowdlerized¹⁷ version of Halley's *Handbook*. Such expurgations in no way change history, nor alter the truth about what Halley wrote concerning the Papal Dominion one iota. However, they do tend to hide the truth from the unsuspecting readers of such deceptive material.

Halley also wrote, "The description of Babylon the Great Harlot seated on the Seven-headed ten-horned Beast, while it may have ultimate reference to a situation yet to appear, yet it exactly fits Papal Rome. And there is, *so far nothing else that it does fit....*"¹⁸ ...

¹⁶ Halley, Henry, *Bible Handbook*, Chicago: self-published, 1955, 651.

¹⁷ The word bowdlerize means to expurgate, to remove from, or modify parts of a book that is considered improper or offensive to fine taste. It is taken from Thomas Bowdler, who published an expurgated edition of the *Works of Shakespeare* in 1818. He removed what he considered vulgar or lewd references used by Shakespeare.

¹⁸ Halley, 631. Emphasis added.

The truth is, the Protestant Reformation started a great historical war. This war was fought first bibliographically over *Sola Scriptura*—the Bible *alone*, the only authority in the church. Then it was fought soteriologically, over justification by faith alone in the finished work of Christ; then it was fought christologically between Christ and the Papal Antichrist; and then ecclesiastically over the identity of the true catholic church of God's elect versus the antichristian system of the Papal Dominion. These wars, struggles, battles, and debates helped in the spread of the Reformation geographically across Europe and on into the Western hemisphere. These wars have never ended. They will continue until Jesus comes again. The big difference between the times we are covering and modern times is that very, very few have any interest in carrying on the polemic of the Reformers today against the enduring corruption, error, and blasphemy of the Papal Dominion. Indeed, while Roman Catholics and agnostics criticize certain aspects of the Papal Dominion; men who are supposed to know their Bibles and Biblical doctrines have little to say.