

The Circular Nature of Heresy in the Church Week 7

I would like to now speak on the nature of mediation of Christ. Is it he who is the sole mediator between we and God or is there another? Is there something or someone better than he? According to the Roman Catholic Church, there is one who is superior in every aspect of mediation between God and man, and that person is namely Mary, the earthly mother of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. But can this be? I mean, does she have a better footing with the Father? Does she, who being born a sinful person as we, somehow obtained a better name than Christ? Is this possible?! If so, where in the scriptures is this taught? Let us take a look at an excerpt on the matter:

Is Romanism Christianity?

by **T.W. Medhurst**
Glasgow, Scotland

[This resource is excerpted from Chapter XXI of THE FUNDAMENTALS, VOLUME III, from the four volume edition issued by the Bible Institute of Los Angeles in 1917. This four volume set has been reprinted by Baker Books (ISBN 0-8010-8809-7). THE FUNDAMENTALS was edited by R.A. Torrey, A.C. Dixon, and others. A copyright does not appear in the 4 volume reprint. T.W. Medhurst held a pastorate from 1862 to 1869 at the Baptist Church, North Frederick Street, in Glasgow, Scotland.]

I am aware that, if I undertake to prove that *Romanism is not Christianity*, I must expect to be called "bigoted, harsh, uncharitable." Nevertheless I am not daunted; for I believe that on a right understanding of this subject depends the salvation of millions.

One reason why Popery has of late gained so much power in Great Britain and Ireland, and is gaining. power still, is that many Protestants look on it now as a form of true Christianity; and think that, on that account, notwithstanding great errors, it ought to be treated very tenderly. Many suppose that at the time of the Reformation, it was reformed, and that it is now much nearer the truth than it was before that time. It is still, however, the same; and, if examined, will be found to be so different from, and so hostile to, real Christianity, that it is not, in fact, Christianity at all.

Christianity, as revealed in the Sacred Writings, is salvation by Christ. It sets Him before us as at once a perfect man, the everlasting God, the God-man Mediator; who, by appointment of the Father, became a Substitute for all who were given Him. It teaches that by Him God's justice was magnified, and His mercy made manifest; that, for all who trust in Him, He fulfilled the law, and brought in *a complete righteousness*; and that by this alone they can be justified before God. It teaches that His death was a perfect sacrifice, and made full satisfaction and atonement for their sins, so that God lays no sin to their charge, but gives them a free and full pardon; that He has ascended to the right hand of God, and has sent down the Holy Spirit to be His only Vicar and Representative on earth; that He is the only Mediator between the righteous God and sinful man; that it is by the Holy Spirit alone that we are convinced of sin, and led to trust in Jesus; that all

who trust in Him and obey Him with the obedience of faith and love, are saved, and, being saved, are made "kings and priests unto God," and have -"eternal life" in Him.

This is Christianity, the Christianity which the Apostles preached. But side by side with the Apostles, Satan went forth also, and preached what Paul calls "*another gospel*." Paul did not mean that it was *called* "another gospel;" but that as Satan "beguiled Eve through his subtlety" (2 Cor. 11: 3), so some, while professing to teach the Gospel, were turning men away "from the simplicity that is in Christ;" and by doing so, did, in fact, teach "another gospel." Paul, speaking of those who were thus deceived, said, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto *another gospel* which is *not another*; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ." He means, that there can be but *one Gospel*, though something else may be called the gospel; and he says of those who had thus perverted "the Gospel of Christ": "If any one preach any other gospel unto you..... let him be accursed" (Gal. 1: 6-9). He calls those who did so "false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ;" and he adds, "no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works" (2 Cor. 11: 13-15).

Let us consider well the meaning of these passages of Scripture. Paul says that there cannot be another Gospel; the conclusion, therefore, is evident, that these teachers were not teachers of Christianity, but of a *Satanic delusion*.

I submit that the teaching of Rome is at least as different from that of the Sacred Writings as that which Paul calls "another gospel;" and that, therefore, his words authorize us to say that Romanism is not Christianity.

FIRST, Christianity consists of what Christ has taught, and commanded in Scripture, But Romanism does not even profess to be founded on Scripture only: it claims a right to depart from what is contained in it—a right to add 'to Scripture what is handed down *by tradition*; and both to depart from and add to Scripture by making *new decrees*. It says that councils and the pope have been empowered by the Holy Spirit to make decrees by which, in reality, the doctrines delivered by Christ are *entirely annulled*. To show how extensively this has been done, let the reader endeavor to trace the full effect of what Rome teaches as to baptismal regeneration, transubstantiation, justification by means of sacraments and deeds done by us, the invocation of saints—things which are entirely opposed to the teaching of Christ.

The canons of the Council of Trent, which sat at intervals from 1545 to 1563, may be called the Bible of Romanism. They were translated into English, as late as 1848, by a Roman Catholic, priest, under the sanction of Dr. Wiseman. The Council tells us that one end for which it was called was "the extirpation of heresies." ' What, then, according to it, is *the standard of truth*? It tells us that Rome receives *The Sacred Scriptures* and "*The Unwritten Traditions.....preserved in continuous succession in the Catholic Church, with equal affection of piety and reverence*" (Session 4) ; also that "no one may dare *to interpret* the Sacred Scriptures" in a manner contrary to that "Church; *whose it is to judge respecting the true sense and interpretation* of the Sacred

Scriptures;" nor may any one interpret them "in a manner contrary to the unanimous consent of the fathers" (Session 4).

Christ commands us to "prove all things" (1 Thess. 5: 21) to "search the Scriptures" (John 5: 39) ; to ascertain for ourselves, as the Bereans did, whether what we hear agrees with what we read in Scripture (Acts 17: 11). He commands us to "hold fast the form of sound words," uttered by Himself and His Apostles (2 Tim. 1: 13) ; to "contend earnestly for the *faith delivered once for all* to the saints" (Jude 3). But Rome says, "Let no one dare to do so"-let all "*Christian princes..... cause [men] to observe*" our decrees (Session 16), nor "*permit*" them to be "*violated by heretics*" (Session 25). The Romanist must not dare to have an opinion of his own; his mind must exist in the state of utter prostration and bondage; he must not attempt to understand the Scripture himself. And if others attempt it-if they dare to receive the teaching and do the will of Christ, instead of receiving fictions and obeying commands of men, which wholly subvert and destroy the truth and will of Jesus, Rome commands the civil ruler to restrain them; and, by the use of fines, imprisonment, and death, to compel them, if possible, to renounce what God requires them to maintain and follow, even unto death.

The Bible, the whole Bible, nothing but the Bible, is the standard and the rule of Christianity. To know its meaning for ourselves, to receive its teaching, to rely on its promises, to trust in its Redeemer, to obey Him from delight of love, and to refuse to follow other teaching, is Christianity itself. But Romanism denies all this; and therefore, Romanism is not Christianity.

FIFTHLY: Christianity says "there is *one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*" (1 Tim. 2: 5), who is at the right hand of the Father (Eph. 1: 20), where He "ever lives to make intercession" for us (Heb. 7: 25). Christianity says that there is but *one Mediator*; that we cannot draw near to God except through Jesus.

What says Romanism? I quote from "a book of devotion for every day in the month of May" published by Papal authority. "Great is the need you have of Mary in order to be saved! Are you innocent? Still your innocence is, however, under great danger. How many, more innocent than you, have fallen into sin, and been damned? Are you penitent? Still your perseverance is very uncertain. Are you sinners? Oh, what need you have of Mary to convert you! Ah, if there were no Mary, perhaps you would be lost! However, by the devotion of this month, you may obtain her patronage, and your own salvation. Is it possible that a mother so tender can help bearing a Son so devout? For a rosary, for a fast, she has sometimes conferred signal graces upon the greatest of sinners. Think, then, what she will do for you for a whole month dedicated to her service!"

Here you see that Mary is everything; that Jesus Christ is nothing. Romanism teaches also that it is right to ask the intercession of all departed saints (Session 25). How dreadful is it that sinners are thus kept back from Jesus, and are prevented from reaching God through Him.

Popery is emphatically *anti-Christian*: it is the adversary of Christ in all the offices which He sustains. It is the enemy of His *prophetic* office; for it chains up that Bible which He inspired. It

is the enemy of His *priestly* office; for, by the mass it denies the efficacy of that sacrifice which He offered once for all on Calvary. It is the enemy of His *kingly* office; for it tears the crown from His head to set it on that of the Pope.

(Excerpt taken from The Fundamentals Volume II Chapter XXI "Is Romanism Christianity?" by T. W. Medhurst, Glasgow, Scotland. Reprinted 2008 by Baker Books)