

Literary Policy of Rome

by Ian Paisley

The Roman Catholic Church seeks to control what people read and think, and will not tolerate dissent or opposition.

Scripture: Proverbs 18:21, John 8:32, 2 Corinthians 10:5, Ephesians 6:12, 2 Timothy 3:16

Topics: "Freedom Of Speech", "Roman Catholicism"

Description

Ian Paisley preaches about the freedom of speech and publication as birthrights of Englishmen, highlighting the contrast between the liberties enjoyed in England and the restrictions imposed by Rome, particularly regarding the liberty of the Press. He emphasizes Rome's fear of the Word of God and its efforts to suppress the Bible and other evangelical works, showcasing the intolerance and control exerted by the Roman Catholic Church through documents like the Index Expurgatorius. Paisley warns against deception regarding the reformation of Popery, pointing to the enduring decrees and anathemas of the Council of Trent as a testament to the unchanging nature of the Roman Catholic Faith.

Transcript

FREEDOM of speech, and freedom of publication, are among the birthrights of Englishmen, and rank with the choicest blessings of which this happy country has to boast. In this respect, no land is comparable to the kind we live in. There is nothing which an Englishman ought to say, to print, or to publish, which he may not.

It is much otherwise in some other lands, of whose glorious liberties much is heard. Englishmen, therefore, of all others, form the best tribunal to which an appeal can be presented on the subject of the liberty of the Press. Perhaps there are few lights in which Rome has been less looked at by the common people, although nothing more strikingly illustrates her true character than her conduct towards the Press.

Her Literary Policy, as set forth in her damnatory catalogues, or indexes, both prohibitory and expurgatory, furnishes one of the most extraordinary illustrations of her spirit and character that can be conceived of. They supply, an amusing test of the degrees of merit and evangelical excellence in a literary work.

It may be that some of our readers have met with the valuable and interesting publication of Mr. Hobart Seymour, a clergyman of the Established Church, entitled "Mornings among the Jesuits at Rome." That work excels most others of the same class, in its moderation and candour; and in the good feeling it displays towards the gentlemen with whom its author was in habits of intercourse; and yet it is a fact, that it

has been recently honoured with a place among the books prohibited at Rome. What must be the state of things in a country which renders it unsafe to give circulation to such a book?

Among the prohibited books, a conspicuous place is assigned to the Bible, especially to the English version of it. Booksellers have been severely punished for selling, or otherwise disposing of the Word of God in the vulgar tongue indiscriminately, inasmuch as none are allowed to read it without a "written permission;" no man, therefore, who possesses a Bible will "receive absolution till he has first delivered up such Bible to the ordinary; and booksellers who shall sell or otherwise dispose of them to any person, not having such permission, shall forfeit the value of the books; while regulars shall neither read nor purchase such books without a special licence from their superiors."

What say our English readers to this? Rome has always been in fearful dread of the Word of God, and of every publication, the object of which was to explain it. The public have been taught to believe that the Scriptures are a large mass of poison calculated to taint the very air, and hence we find the Inquisitor General deeply lamenting that "some had carried their audacity to such an execrable extent, as to desire to read the Holy Scriptures in the vulgar tongue, without any fear of encountering the most mortal poison."

Thus it is that the Inquisition talks of the book, the leaves of which were sent for the healing of the nations. We need hardly say, that from the first, English authors have held a most distinguished place in the list of condemned book, It were long to give the list of the good men who are honoured with exclusion, and whose names stand upon the roll of the anathema.

While the Church of Rome owes so much to ignorance in her own community, she owes not a little to ignorance out of it. Among the points to which ignorance extends, an important place is due to the Index Expurgatorius-one of the most extraordinary illustrative documents on earth. Nothing more strikingly illustrates the true spirit of the Romish system. It is all over written with bigotry and intolerance; most impressively showing what would be the fate of the world were the priests once more to be in the ascendant.

It is to be carefully noted that this once renowned, and, in Italy, still terrible document, is by no means a dead letter, but a living power for evil; it is an accurate embodiment of the soul of the system; it is throughout stamped with the sanction of the pretended successor of St. Peter, as the supreme head of the main body.

The province of the Index Expurgatorius has been admirably managed by the Jesuits. It is sounded as with a trumpet, that this serious instrument has no authority whatever in Spain, in Portugal, in France, in Austria, in the Netherlands, or in the Popish portion of Great Britain and Ireland; and this is set forth as a proof that the power of the Pope on the Continent is gone, and that those lands have therefore nothing to fear in which the spirit of liberality reigns; and weak men, comprising a large number of the upper classes, and even of our statesmen, believe it.

Allowing that such is the fact it supplies but little ground for those nations felicitating each other. The Jesuit is there! The Popish church in most of those nations has actually an index of her own, almost a duplicate of that very Roman index prohibitory and expurgatory.

That of Spain and Portugal is even more intolerant. The Creed of Pope Pius IV. -The creed at this hour of the Roman world-holds every Catholic "to believe and profess all things defined, more especially by the Council of Trent, from which all subsequent Roman indexes followed." Whatever, therefore, be his

allegations, such is his creed, and at his peril he must stand to it! Even the Maynooth Committee, in their famous examination before the Committee of the Lords in 1826, in spite of their cunning, were compelled to admit that "all Catholics will respect the prohibition of the Congregation of the Index;" that is, all Catholics will obey its high mandate denouncing the books which it denounces, and refusing to admit them into their houses. The management of this affair is mainly the business of the Jesuits, for whom it is very fit employment. But for the English Constitution, the people of this country would long since have been treated to an index of her own.

It is sufficiently shown by the Rev. Joseph Mendham (Mendham, p.xvii) that all the necessary arrangements have been made, and kept in store for the fitting hour. According to that MS. "public and private libraries must be searched and examined for books, as also all bookbinders, stationers, and booksellers' shops; and not only heretical books and pamphlets, but also profane, vain, lascivious, and other such hurtful, dangerous poisons are utterly to be removed, burned, suppressed, and severe order and punishment appointed for such as shall conceal these kinds of writings."

It is the custom of Romanists, for obvious reasons to associate bad books with the Bible and works on evangelical Religion (Part 1. chap. 9, p 9495.) The same work provides for the prospective abolition of all laws "in Prejudice to the Catholic Roman Religion, and to restore and put in full authority again all old laws that ever were in use in England in favour of the same and against errors and heretics."

Such were among the contemplated blessings of the Pope for ' England, which were only kept back by the Revolution; let no man, then, err in this matter; the same things are still in store the moment that circumstances render it practicable to introduce them. Change for the better there is none; and only the ignorant and the foolish will believe there is. Let no man, we say, deceive himself as multitudes have done and are still doing. The Council of Trent, which we have so largely quoted in the present publication, is the standard of Romish doctrine. This was frankly confessed by Archbishop Murray and Bishop Doyle in the Committee of the House of Lords aforesaid, and the celebrated Mr. Charles Butler, the barrister the ablest advocate of the Popish Church in our times-acknowledges that the Creed of the Council of Trent is "an accurate and explicit summary of the Roman Catholic Faith."

After this, we say again, let no man be deceived by those, who, from. Whatever cause, assert that Popery is reformed. There stand the decrees, the canons, and the anathemas of the Council of Trent, like the seven hills on which the emblematic monster sat in prophetic vision. To those Decrees, if we add the Index Expurgatorius, we shall have an embodiment of sentiments and of. Doctrine of a character that it cannot be gainsaid, nor resisted, which Will demonstrate in a manner the most fearful, the true nature of the system, which the Word of God has designated - the Mystery of Iniquity.

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