

Article of the Month  
October, 2017

## ***500 Years at Halloween!***

Christians put no stock in Halloween. The day after it, however, is, in the liturgical denominations, called “All Saints Day.” In this article, however, we are not really interested in either day *except* to recognize that on Halloween (October 31st) of this year we mark the 500-year mark since the great Martin Luther nailed his famous “95 Theses” to the door of the church in Wittenberg, Germany. That single event started the most significant changes in Christianity since the days of the Apostles — an event *predicted* in the prophecies of Daniel 11. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should take notice of this historic anniversary.

### THE “REFORMATION”

Dr. Luther, a Roman Catholic priest at the time, was painfully aware of corruptions of both doctrine and practice in the Church of Rome. His hope was to challenge them in order to create “reform.” It didn’t work that way. His admirably stubborn refusals to recant from his Scriptural accusations led to his 1521 excommunication and the subsequent forming of a church *separate from* the Roman church. That separation is now known as the Lutheran Church. The reform efforts are now known as “The Reformation.” The entire group of Christians who were thus and subsequently separated from the Roman yoke are now known as “Protestants” because of their protest of Roman church doctrines and practices.

Today, however, “Protestantism” has lost most of its protest. It is not uncommon to urge that we should forget past differences and come together as one Christian church. It sounds nice. But it is a spiritually unfortunate disregard for all of the blood that was shed and for all of the scholarly efforts over the centuries of trying to arrive at TRUTH. Religion is not a social club. It is an effort (by its true and dedicated adherents) to arrive at a knowledge of the true God and what He stands for. Many of them were burned at the stake or suffered other tortures for their faith in “truth.”

The reformers (from all the various denominations which sprang into existence after Luther) were of one mind that the Papal office constituted the “Man of Sin” which the Apostle Paul describes in II Thessalonians. They were all of one mind that the Roman church was the “Antichrist” that the Apostle John describes in his first epistle. Most of that conviction seems to have disappeared or is disappearing in our day. It merely

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requires a reading of “The Epistle Dedicatory” of the King James Bible to see the fervency of these beliefs among Protestants (even if the Church of England didn’t really consider itself Protestant). It is quite unfortunate (and probably in the spirit of “political correctness”) that many publishers of the King James Bible no longer include “The Epistle Dedicatory” at the beginning of their King James Bibles. It is one of those evidences that the protest has gone out of Protestantism. And yet, the King James Bible remains one of the most (if not THE most) favored Bibles in circulation. But the very PURPOSE of its translation was for English-speaking Christians to have a reliable translation in order for them to read Scripture and to relieve themselves of Papal influences. It came out in 1611 — one century after Luther’s reforming efforts.

This watering-down of protest is very much indicated by more modern concepts regarding the “Antichrist” and the “Man of Sin.” Jesuit Catholic scholars were so appalled by their church’s being called “Antichrist” and “Man of Sin” that they invented a *counter* interpretation which MOST PROTESTANTS NOW ACCEPT! That *counter interpretation* is that a single INDIVIDUAL is *yet coming* who will be the “Antichrist” and the “Man of Sin” and will deceive the whole world! Scripturally, those things ARE PAST. But Protestants have, by and large, accepted the Catholic interpretation as being correct — thus absolving the Roman church from the descriptions so carefully and Scripturally declared by our Protestant forefathers. What a pity! What a victory for Satan’s promulgations of error. What a CURRENT way to deceive sincere seeking Christians!

### DANIEL’S DESCRIPTION OF PROTESTANTISM

In Daniel 11:34 we have God’s description (through Gabriel to Daniel) of the advent of the Protestant Reformation in history. It would be nice to take the time to explain the entire context of the passage, but that would constitute an article in itself. Since we have just mentioned the King James Bible, we will quote from it even though its English in this passage is antiquated:

“Now, when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help, but many shall cleave to them with flatteries.”

“Holpen” is the old English word-form meaning “helped.” The text begins with, “When they shall fall.” This is a reference to true Christians who had been so very persecuted and weakened while under the domination of the apostate Roman church. Verse 33 shows that these had been the true teachers among Christians, but they had been slain by the sword and burnt at the stake because their perceptions of truth dared to vary from the accepted Roman church doctrines. Verse 34 then says that something would happen that would HELP them. That “something” is the advent of Protestantism or the “Reformation” — “a little help!”

Unfortunately, as the verse also shows, the Protestant movement ALSO would decline in spirituality because fleshly-minded individuals, governments, and denominations would

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**take over** (“cleave to”) the Protestant movement “with flatteries.” It has ALWAYS been the case that worldliness has overcome spirituality. Jesus’ parable about the comingling of “wheat and tares” (Matthew 13) was given to make this very point.

What does this mean in OUR DAY? It means that nearly all of Christianity has succumbed to the “flatteries” of worldly ways. Many are deceived now by the plea for “union” among all Christians — whether or not truth suffers from such a union! The Protestant Reformation seems to have ended! And yet we see Scripturally that God, Himself, provided Protestantism for a “help.” What a slap in His face to try to reverse it!

### WHAT REFORMS WERE NEEDED?

Again, it would be a long article to enumerate even superficially the errors which can be attributed to the Roman church — both in doctrine and practice. And, while we despise the errors which have been heaped upon Christianity over the centuries, we **MUST** clearly emphasize that all criticisms are of **DOCTRINE** and **PRACTICE** — **NOT** of people. Adherents of Catholicism are just as fine people as are the adherents of other faiths.

It is the position of Catholicism that church tradition has more authority than Scripture. This alone should send Christians running! Luther’s position was quite to the contrary. It was (and should have been) his contention that there is no authority greater than the Bible. This distinction between Rome and Protestantism remains to this day. We might note, however, that much of churchianity has seemingly begun to prefer its own doctrinal philosophies over the Word of God.

The Roman church accepts a man as its head. Protestantism does not. There is no replacement or “stand-in” for Jesus as head of the Church. Fortunately this barrier (the “Pope”) will keep actual denominational union from ever occurring. But it does not seem to dampen enthusiasm for cooperation of Protestantism with Catholicism. It should.

Luther was unalterably opposed to the doctrine of “the Mass.” In this doctrine, there is supposedly a literal and magical “change of substance” wherein the communion bread actually becomes the body of Christ, and the communion wine actually becomes his blood. It is then claimed that this constitutes a re-sacrifice of Jesus. The Bible refers to this doctrine as “The Abomination of Desolation” because it desolates (or makes inadequate) the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.

In Catholic doctrine, it is the priests who constitute the church. The common parishioners, the Catholic people, are not considered part of the church. (Many of them do not even realize this!) Luther realized that this was a serious error and taught that Christianity was a priesthood of the congregation. No priest was needed to act between the Christian and his God.

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Finally, it must be noted that good Bible study makes it abundantly clear that the Roman church in prophecy constitutes “Babylon” — that great *mystery* “city” which has ruled over the kings of the earth (Revelation 17). It is portrayed as a “harlot” because it has joined itself to civil governments (instead of to Jesus) and has actually claimed that it thus constituted the Kingdom of God on earth. What a farce of concepts! The Kingdom for which we all pray (Catholics included) will bring peace on earth and eternal blessings of life and welfare which are nearly beyond our imaginations.

Once more we must emphasize that we abhor the hatred of people. But we do not abhor the hatred of error. Jesus was faithful because he “loved righteousness and hated iniquity” (Hebrews 1:9). But he hated no persons; nor would he counsel violence against any (as the Roman church DID) — and, unfortunately, even as some Protestant groups have done likewise!

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Happy “Reformation Day” (not Halloween)! What Martin Luther began on that day was just one event in a series of events which have brought us to great spiritual enlightenment at this end of the age. It is something to be cherished.