

A KINDLY WORD TO PROTESTANTS AND TO ROMAN CATHOLICS

A SERMON

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“He that judges me is the Lord.” 1 Corinthians 4:4

I SHALL step this morning perhaps a little out of my usual way of preaching, at least, in the first part of my discourse, and I shall take a twofold view of our text. First, *the right which all the people of God have of appeal to God, and to God alone*; and then, secondly, as far as the time shall permit, *the respects in which, or after what order, the Lord judged the apostle Paul*, as an example of the order after which he will judge all his people.

My mind during the week was led to these words by perusing with some degree of interest, and with some degree of impatience, the Encyclical Letter of the Pope of Rome, that we have had this past week in the public papers; just showing us that Rome, that is, the system of Rome now is just what it was. We see there that the Pope deeply laments that he has not power over all the governments of the world, and of course, over all the people; and he pretty clearly avows there that he is in the place not only of Jesus Christ, that is, that Jesus Christ is not to govern, the world, but that his Holiness the Pope, the sovereign Pontiff, he is the man that should by right govern the world. Not only does he thus put himself into the place of Jesus Christ, and so put Jesus Christ out, but he puts God Almighty himself out, and gives us to understand that the government of the world is committed to his Holiness the Pope; that is, God has committed it to him. Now, then, the Bible says that “the Lord shall send strong delusion, and they shall believe a lie;” and we have heard talk of profane men laying wagers which could tell the greatest lie; and I think if all hell were to study for a long time they could not manufacture a greater falsehood than that, namely, that the great God of heaven and earth has committed to the Pope the government of the world. Let us, therefore, this morning, by way of introduction, dwell briefly upon this subject, I will do so very dispassionately and very carefully, because it is not persons, but principles, it is not men, but systems, that of course we are to bear testimony against.

First, then, it is clear, and we might as well remind ourselves of it, that the word of God itself forbids any appeal from itself to any other rule or authority whatever. I need not remind you of

this in the Old Testament. Does not Moses, when giving the law, declare that “you shall not diminish it, nor shall you add a word thereto”? And may I not revert also to observations we have often made before, that when the ark was made (and that was important, as far as life and death were concerned, to Noah and his family) there was not a particle there of human device or authority in the construction of that plan by which they were to escape the flood. And when Israel came out of Egypt, and the Lord appeared to Moses, no less than three times in the 3rd chapter of the book of Exodus does the Lord impress upon Moses the order of things by which he was to deliver the people; no less than three times in that chapter does the Lord remind Moses that he appears to him as the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. This was to impress upon the mind of Moses the necessity of abiding by that order of truth which the Lord had revealed unto him, and Moses dared not add a single syllable, nor take a syllable therefrom. Yes, I will go farther, and declare that Moses dared not add even a jot to, nor take away one tittle from, what God delivered unto him. And just so also in the erection of the tabernacle in the wilderness. Why, loops, and taches, and curtains seem very humble sorts of things; yet, humble as they were, the great God would not allow a deviation from anything there set forth. “See,” said he again and again, “that you make it according to the pattern shown unto you in the mount.” And so, of Solomon’s temple; and, indeed, you will find this truth spread all through the Scriptures, that the Lord disdains anything human mixed with his blessed truth. Hence, when he called Joshua to his great mission, again and again did the Lord say, “You shall keep this law,” that is, the Lord’s word, “and all the commandments thereof, and nothing else but that, that you may make your way prosperous, and no man shall then be able to stand before you.” And passing by the solemnities of the Old Testament upon this matter, for I could, only time does not suffer me to do so, bring many proofs from the Old Testament of the Lord’s disapprobation of human tradition. I need not remind you of the prayer of Elijah; and what was that but a prayer against human device? They had set up something of their own devising, against which the prophet prayed. And when Ahab was about to go to Ramoth-gilead, and was deluded by false prophets, though, of course, for a man to call them false prophets would be at that day to risk not only his reputation, and character, and liberty, but his very life, and so, when they came to Micaiah, they said, “Now all the prophets speak good concerning the king; speak you as they do.” But, said Micaiah, “As Jehovah lives” for I will give the word as it is in the original there, “As Jehovah lives, what Jehovah says that will I speak.” And when the Lord sent Jonah to Nineveh he said, “Preach the preaching that I gave you.” And in the New Testament does not the Savior declare, “In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”? I am merely reminding you now of your right as people of God, that you are to abide by the word of God, and appeal to that; it is the Lord that is your judge, and none other. I need not remind you of the twenty-third chapter of Matthew. Can there be a more solemn denunciation upon Popery; for what is that religion of the Pharisees of old but a prototypical Popery? Does he not pronounce there solemn woes upon every one of their devices? And people say, “Oh, never mind; it does not matter about doctrine. Well, but the Savior, after denouncing those human traditions, sums it up in this way; he calls those men, however religious they may be, however pious, however sincere, he calls them by a name, not in a way of reproach, any further than sin does bring reproach upon us; he says, “You serpents, you generation of vipers, how can you escape the damnation, of hell?” And so, they had set up these human traditions by which to judge people; and hence, “Why do not your disciples keep the commandments and traditions of the elders?” See the solemn denunciation, then, that the Lord puts upon human tradition there. And then, again, come to the very last chapter of the book of the Revelation; surely those who have the fear of God in their hearts, surely those who know the infinite worth, for it is an expression none too strong, those that know the infinite

worth of the pure word and truth of God, an unerring God, a faithful God, an unchanging God, a loving God, a God of mercy eternal and of glory endless, people who know him surely must feel there is a meaning in the way in which the Holy Scriptures are summed up at the last, that "if any man shall add unto these things" any human tradition or human device, "God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book;" not merely in the book of the Revelation, but in this book of the Bible, this book of God: for though divided into many books, it is one book; it is the one complete book, of which our Maker is the Author; and although by translation some verbal errors may exist in it, yet not one doctrinal error, not one error of any kind substantially exists in this wondrous book. And he that shall take from these things, "God shall take away his part" that is, the part he professes to have, "out of the book of life." Is this to be trifled with? Oh, my hearer, the Scriptures, the Holy Scriptures, are able to make us wise unto eternal salvation. This, then, is one sentiment which we think it right we should put into print, and let our fellow country people, the Roman Catholics, see the sentiments we hold concerning their religion, which we solemnly, without any unkind feeling, believe to be most awful delusion; and we tremble when we find so many thousands and thousands of immortal souls deluded, and ensnared, and led astray, by human device, taking that human device for divine authority. Thus, then, we conclude that the word of the Lord, and the word of the Lord only, is safe to rely upon, is safe to walk by, is safe to be judged by. We own no authority on earth whatever in these things. Hence the Savior says, "Call no man" why, the Pope never could have read that, I should think, or else he would leave the chair at once, "call no man on earth master; for one is your Master, even Christ." Why, surely if the Savior meant a succession of men that were to take his place and be masters, he would have given us some hint of the kind; but he has not given us the smallest hint of it. He has rather told us that false Christs should rise; and we have had already upwards of 300 Popes. Why, in the 14th century, as you are aware, we had as many as two and three Popes at one time, and they were driven from Rome, and had their chair at Avignon in France; but into that wretched history I will not enter. But the Savior says, "One is your Master, even Christ." We disdain every other master in matters pertaining to the redemption of our precious souls, in matters pertaining to the justification of our precious souls, in matters pertaining to that eternal life and eternal glory that are by Christ Jesus the Lord. Thus, then, we read the Scriptures, we find the Scriptures prohibit all human tradition, and consequently we follow the Scriptures in that, turn our back upon all human devices, not from any unkind feeling even to the Pope himself, but from an assurance that whatsoever is not of God cannot be acceptable to him, right and pleasing in his sight. But we are told, in the next place, that Peter was bishop of Rome; but where is their Scripture authority for so saying? The Bible does not say he was bishop of Rome; the Savior did not make the apostles, or any one of them, bishop of any limited locality. Their commission was, their diocese was, the whole world; "Go you into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." The apostles all shared in the care of all the churches, and no one apostle settled down in a locality as an overseer of any particular part. Well, we have no authority for this, then, that he was bishop of Rome; and unless they can produce it from the Holy Spirit's testimony, we must hesitate in believing it. Well, I look into my Bible, and I find Peter at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost; so, he was not bishop of Rome yet. About three years after, perhaps more than that, we will call it three years after, the Savior's resurrection, Saul of Tarsus is called by grace; and three years after that Paul went up to Jerusalem; that is six years; and he saw Peter there. Why, haven't you gone to Rome yet? No; still at Jerusalem. Fourteen years after that, fourteen and six I suppose you calculating people would make twenty of, he goes up again to Jerusalem, passes down to Antioch, which every schoolboy knows was a place in Syria, not Assyria, but Syria, on the north-east of Canaan; he found Peter there, and had occasion to reprove him. So, Peter had not

gone to Rome yet; twenty years, and not gone to Rome yet. And it does not appear that Peter had yet written one of his epistles. Well, then we find Peter at Jerusalem, and at Joppa, and at Caesarea, preaching the gospel; then, after this, when he writes his epistles, which must have been some years after the apostle Paul saw him at Antioch, he is actually at Babylon, 400 miles the other way, in the east; and he does not write to Rome, but to the strangers scattered over the different provinces of Western Asia, which provinces he names, and winds up his epistle with saying, "The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, salutes you." So, there was a church at Babylon, and Peter was there, and he has not got to Rome yet. Long time: he will not enjoy his Popish chair long: his chair must have got very cold before this, I think; he is not there yet: and when he did get there I don't know. It is true, old Jerome, the Bethlehem monk, who lived nearly three hundred years after Peter, does mumble out something about Peter coming to Rome; but what notice is to be taken of an old superstitious monk like that? One-half of his writings are such extreme rubbish, that it is waste of time to read them. Therefore, I have no faith in human tradition. So that, in the first place, we must call upon our Roman Catholic friends to prove to us that Peter ever was at Rome at all; and then they will have to prove that he was bishop of Rome; and then they will have a more difficult point still, and that is to prove that Peter appointed a successor; and if he appointed a successor, who was he? and by what authority did he appoint that successor? I watched very narrowly when I read Dr. Wiseman's work upon Protestantism and Catholicism. We are put side by side, and of course you may be sure how it is; our faults are brought forward, and their excellences are brought forward, and so in the comparison we go to the wall. But never mind; that is very natural for the cardinal to do that; very natural that is, I hardly blame the man, so natural. But when he comes to prove the connection between the official position of Peter and the official character of the Pope, he turns and twists, he reasons, he runs back, he runs forward, runs to the right, and runs to the left, until you hardly know what he is about.

But I give him credit for being a wonderfully learned man; but in trying to prove a connection between Peter and the Pope, he does break down most dreadfully. Our cardinal cannot make his bridge right across; he begins making the bridge, but somehow or another the materials are all gone, and there is a tremendous gap left between Peter and the Pope. Thus, then, if Roman Catholics hold that Peter was bishop of Rome, let them give us a scripture for it; if they hold that he appointed a successor, give us a scripture for it. Is the Pope of Rome regulated by the doctrines of the epistles of Peter? Does he take the "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father"? Does he take the doctrines contained in that chapter, and the testimonies contained in that epistle? Does he, or does he not? That is the great question. And is there a word in Peter's epistle about a successor, or about one to whom the government of the world is committed? Is there a word about Popery, transubstantiation, the making of monks, nunnery, and various other human, wicked devices and inventions, inventions evidently after the working of Satan? I would ask the question, What analogy is there between the epistles of Peter and Popery? Take Popery, and read a sample of it, and then see if you can find anything else but entire collision, entire antagonism, between the testimonies of the apostle Peter and those of Popery. Why, the apostle Peter says, "Not lording it over God's heritage, but being examples unto the flock, in direct opposition to what they say. Thus, then, I will take Peter to be one of my bishops with all my heart and all my soul; that I will do; and when Popery shall strip itself of everything contrary to Peter's epistles, why, then I would as soon be a Catholic as be anything else, of course, if they reject all error, and receive the truth, and abide thereby. So, then the apostle says, "It is the Lord that judges me;" "He that judges me is the Lord." I will be judged by his word; to his word and to his testimony; that is the rule, and that alone, by

which, in matters so ponderous and solemn as our eternal welfare, we are to be judged. Men assuming, blasphemously assuming, the prerogatives of the Most High, power to forgive our sins; who, in the name of mercy, is to forgive their blasphemies? None but that God whom they thus blindly blaspheme.

But, again, the Pope thinks, as we see in his Encyclical Letter very clearly, that he ought to exercise authority over all governments and civil power. Where is your scripture for it? Did Jesus Christ ever admit such a thing to the apostles? Did the apostles ever admit such a thing? Did Peter ever admit such a thing? Where is their authority? The Pope has no more authority over civil governments, or over the civil affairs of the world, than I have to come into your house and take your domestic affairs out of your hands, and command you what you are to eat, and what you are to drink, and how much; and to command you what you are to wear, and what not to wear; and to command you when to eat meat, and when to eat fish, and, indeed, not to allow you to think in your own domestic circles for yourself. If I come in without being asked, and say to the master and mistress of the house, "I have authority over you; you must not lay out a shilling, nor do a single thing, without me," what would you do with me? Well, say you, I should begin to think, "Turn him out." Perhaps you would think I was a maniac, and deal with me according to that law; but if you believed I had rationality, I know what you would do; I know what I should, I know what I should do, I need not tell you, the thing suggests itself. Now what is a kingdom but one great family? The king and the queen are the father and the mother of the people; and she has, the Queen, we should say, as we have not a king now, and unhappily, not the Prince, the Queen has laws by which to govern her kingdom, wholesome laws, barring the law of the Church of England. That old jade, the Church of England, has been more plague to the Queen and to the Parliament than all her family besides; if that old jade were turned out to shift for herself, and feed herself, and clothe herself, and keep herself, why, it would be better for the Government; she is a nuisance in the family circle. Now I say the kingdom is one large family, and that family is governed by certain wholesome laws. Hence, if you and I want protection, where do we go to? If we want protection for matters of conscience, or for our civil liberty, where do we go to? Not to his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, never pronounce the word hardly without saying Cankerbury, don't know how it is; do we go to him? No, we go to our mother the Queen, we go to Her Majesty's Government, we go to Her Majesty's laws; we do just as Paul did when he was interfered with in his citizenship rights; he appealed unto Cesar; and so, when we are interfered with in our citizenship rights we appeal unto Cesar, that is, we appeal to the Government and wholesome laws that the blessed God hath given us. So, then, we conclude that the Pope has not a particle of authority in religion, that he has not a particle of authority in civil affairs, that he has not a particle of authority, human or divine, beyond his own personal affairs; that is about the truth of the matter. "He," then, "that judges me is the Lord."

Now, as a writer whom the Pope quotes well says, "What is authority?" said this writer; and he gives a nice definition of it, a definition to which every Protestant can set his seal. "Authority," he says, "means the sum of numbers and material force." Certainly, it does. If the Pope can get numbers enough on his side to form them into an overwhelming force, he will by that number turn them, if he can, into an overwhelming force, rob every man and woman under the sun of their liberty before God, will set himself above God, and rob us of every particle of liberty that we possess. Therefore, authority means, as the writer well observes, numbers and material force. But with us, authority means the name of our God, the word of our God, the decision of our God. "You

have come unto me with the arms of the Philistines, but I come unto you in the name of the Lord God of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.”

Will his Holiness kindly prove to us from the Scriptures, that all these things he says are errors are really errors? Will he kindly prove to us from the Scriptures that he does possess the universal authority which he claims? We live in an age when we cannot burn error; we must refute it and if his Holiness will now send out a second letter, and by the word of God refute all that he considers heresy, we shall feel instructed, and feel somewhat comforted, and we shall be edified. So then let the Pope do this, and I will, for one, undertake carefully to read it through.

Now I have one word to say about the Roman Catholics, and then I have done upon this subject. I believe a great majority of them are very sincere in their religion; I believe that a great number of them in this country, the majority, I think, of them, would shudder at the thought of reviving the flames of Smithfield, of reviving the Star Chamber, of reviving any of those persecutions we have had before. They say, “We should shudder at the thought; we detest it; we like everyone to have their liberty, and we like heresy to be refuted and not punished.” Can anything be better than that? But mark you, do not stop there; these persons that say this, they say it from good feeling, and it is their present impression; but recollect that these Roman Catholics are always bound to obey any new commandment that comes out from the Vatican, mark that! Dr. Wiseman says in his own book, “The moment you doubt the authority of the church, you cease to be a Catholic; you are without the pale of the church, and thereby without the pale of salvation,” his own words. Now, then, suppose this new commandment comes from the Vatican, “You must do as we tell you; you have power now to harm the heretics; you are opposed to it, but recollect it is our will and command that you do it, on pain of eternal damnation.” The poor deluded Catholic thinks that he must either join in carrying out this commandment, though against his own natural feelings, against his temporal interest, against many of the associations in which he stands in life, yet he thinks he is bound to join in destroying these heretics, or else his soul will be eternally lost. That would be the feeling of the Catholic. And what would he do between the two? You know which he would do, and you know what the Savior said, that “the time comes,” and the time did come, God grant it may never come again, but the time did come, “when he that kills you will think that he does God service.” I therefore give the Catholics credit for every good feeling, and even some of their priests, I believe, would shrink from these persecutions, and wish them not to come. But then, when the command comes from the Vatican, and you really believe, supposing you did believe such a thing, which through mercy we do not, but the Catholics do, they really believe that unless they obey the authority of the church, the eternal damnation of the soul is sure. Why, the man naturally would reason, “Which had I better do, burn the heretics and go to heaven, or let them go, and myself go to hell?” See which way it would go. And thus, then, while I have no immediate fear, still at the same time we must keep well upon the watch, and, as Paul appealed unto Caesar, so, when our civil rights shall be defied, we must, after Scripture manner, after the example of the apostle, appeal unto Caesar, at the same time with prayer unto God. God is our witness that we would not hurt one hair of the head of the Pope himself; our object is not to reproach even Catholicism, but to refute it; our object is not to create any unkind feeling between Protestants and Catholics; our object is to state solemnly, in all humility, and in all kindly feeling, our conviction that the word of God, and the word of God only, is the sure guide of mortal man in things pertaining to his eternal welfare, and that therefore every human authority, every human doctrine, every human ceremony, every human device, ought to be rejected, man must come out from them, and side with God, and for

God, and for God alone. Thus, then, I have borne this morning my humble testimony, first, to the truth that the word of God alone is to be our judge; secondly, there is no proof that Peter was ever at Rome, much less bishop of Rome; third, there is no proof that he ever dreamt of successors. Why should one apostle have any successors more than the other apostles? And if the apostle Peter be called a foundation, that is nothing more than all the apostles and the prophets are called, "Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets." And if there were committed to Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven, that was nothing more than is committed to all the people of God; for what are the keys of the kingdom of heaven? Why, the truths of the gospel; and those who take away the gospel, and put human tradition in the place thereof, are said to take away the keys of the kingdom of heaven; they enter not "in themselves, and hinder those that are entering." And thus, also, I have borne my testimony against all persecution, all evil speaking, all ill-usage in these matters. If we speak the truth usefully, we must speak it in love; though there are times and circumstances when we have to clothe ourselves as with vengeance, and to speak with severity and decision upon those that would in any way injure the cause of the blessed God. There we must hide the face of the ox, hide the face of the man, hide the face of the eagle, and show the face of the lion, be bold and determined, and give everyone to understand that we do not mean to be trifled with, nor to part with one particle of God's blessed truth.

Now, then, passing by these general matters, I come home, in conclusion, to the apostle's own personal state as representing each child of God. And you will find that our text is indicative of unspeakable gladness in the apostle's heart. "He that judges me is the Lord." He felt his freedom from man; he felt his freedom from mortal creatures; he felt his freedom from dying worms; he felt he stood with the Lord, and that he was in the hands, not of man, but of the Lord. "He that judges me is the Lord." And I can only sum up, in conclusion, the order after which the Lord judged the apostle Paul, as he judges all his people. First, he judged him as an object of his choice, "The God of our fathers has chosen you." If the blessed God in mercy and in grace chose, for the election is of grace, then he will judge such a one according to that choice. I have chosen him; his sins are no longer his, they are mine; his guilt is no longer his, it belongs to my dear Son; his unrighteousness is no longer his, I have chosen him out of that; the righteousness of my dear Son is his, the atonement of my dear Son is his; eternal glory is his. He will judge him after that order. And the apostle Paul received this great truth of eternal election with delight, the same as you and I have. I know, if grace had not inscribed our names in the book of life, nothing else ever could have done so. Secondly, the Lord judged him as an object of his love; he loved him. And you know how love will judge. I do not mean that paltry human love that turns into wrath in about two or three minutes, and that wriggles, and turns, and twists, and is more a curse than a blessing wherever it is; no, God's love is free, fixed, infinite, unalterable, undisturbed endearment. He rests in his love, and therefore, he won't jump up sometimes in a passion, and form a judgment of you contrary to the judgment which he has formed of you; no, he rests in his love. "I have loved you with an everlasting love;" and love covers a multitude of sins. Paul knew what law he must have been judged by, apart from God's choice and love of him; he knew that he must have been judged by that law that would have brought all his sins, laid them at his door, and he have been dealt with to eternity according to them. Again, he was judged according to the substitutional perfection of the Lord Jesus Christ, "Loved me, and gave himself for me;" put himself into my place; and whatever he is, that I am reckoned, whatever he is worthy of; that the great Judge will reckon me worthy of. Fourthly, he was judged as a faithful servant. He received God's truth, he held it fast, he mingled nothing with it, pronounced a curse even upon an angel that should bring any other gospel. He

abode firmly by it, never deviated, but said, "I have kept the faith;" knew the gratulation should meet him, "Well done, you good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things; enter you into the joy of your Lord." Ah, what a pleasing anticipation must judgment be to him! Yes, he says, "There is a crown of righteousness laid up for me, which God the righteous judge" there it is, "shall give to me," as a faithful servant, faithful through grace, "by the grace of God I am what I am," "which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day." Paul's heart was too large for him to be selfish, and therefore he said, "Not to me only" not to me only, think not, you little ones, that I am forgetting you, or supposing that you have not the same happy judgment to come, "but for all them also that love his appearing," in that substitutional perfection in which he has put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Fifthly, he would judge the apostle Paul as a victor, as a conqueror. All the promises are to him that overcomes: the apostle was one that stood fast in the truth, and overcame everything contrary to it, and so he was a conqueror. Many run, if I may change the simile, yet not change it much, but only one obtains the prize. You run, your unbelief runs, your carnality runs, the world runs, enemies run, your sins run, all to get the crown away from you; but your precious faith, though it be but small, enables you to rise at times above all these your rivals, and you will get the prize at last. Sin shall not take it from you, nor unbelief, nor carnality, nor the world, nor Satan, nor error; no, you shall keep on the race-ground, on the racecourse; and as your day, so shall be your strength, and you shall gain the glorious prize at the last.

"He that judges me," then, "is the Lord." Oh, the sweet privilege, first, of being judged of the Lord; second, to be brought to be judged by him after this gospel order!