

**Review: Peter A. Botsis, *What is Orthodoxy? (a short explanation of the essence of Orthodoxy and of the differences between the Churches)*, Peter A. Botsis, Attiki, Athens, n.d.**

[N.b. it has been necessary to pay very careful attention to words used by the author as they can easily change a statement from one of truth to error.

Also, the reader should generally substitute the word Christian (Christianity) where Protestant (Protestantism) appears. This is left undone for understanding of those ignorant of the Bible and Church history].

### **Summary**

In five chapters Mr. Botsis gives his view of Orthodoxy, a term meaning 'right' (ορθο) 'thought' (δοξα). The essential claim is the Orthodox faith is *the* holy tradition and only pure and unadulterated form of Christianity, founded by the Apostles and shown preserved in the seven early Church councils. The definition of Orthodoxy as truth is repeated a number of times in various ways, though each time the reader is really being asked to swallow it as self-evident.<sup>1</sup>

As one often finds with Roman Catholicism, Orthodoxy reference to scripture for doctrinal support is sparse, half-hearted and usually out of context. This last point leads to a number of embarrassing usages when the context is read, and suggests people of the Orthodox faith in general tend not to read their Bibles. The Book is given lip service – it is subject to official and infallible interpretation by the infallible interpreter (which not surprisingly is the Orthodox Church!).

A number of strawman arguments, appeal to religious 'mystery', as well as historical revisionism is employed to discredit what Orthodoxy calls 'Protestantism'. Scripture (mis)usage is the same as with Romanists, e.g. James 2.14, 24 for Sola Fide and John 20.22-23 for man having God's power to forgive sin.

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<sup>1</sup>The Bible-believer only accepts the Word of God as self-evident since it came direct from God. The Church on the other hand consists of fallible saints who can never be infallible.

The book's content demonstrates Orthodoxy has little to do with the Gospel of salvation. Much detail of the East-West schism is given, the Nicæan Creed, doctrine of the Filioque, usage of unleavened versus leavened bread, etc. are the core issues. A true Christian in explaining Christianity would first begin with a theme taken from Romans 3.10, 23; 6.23; 10.9-10.

Much common ground does exist between Protestantism and Orthodoxy, especially regarding the Papal dogmas of primacy and infallibility, as well as Orthodox's peaceful nature, in contrast to the bloody persecution of Romanism.

## I. What is Orthodoxy?

Surprisingly, in giving an authoritative answer to the question of where absolute truth can be found the author makes an appeal not to tradition, but the Holy Bible (I Timothy 3.15). An attempt is later made to resolve this implicit dilemma of final authority (between the Holy Bible and tradition), where the former can **only** be accepted as truth with an approbation of sorts *from* a person's blind acceptance of *tradition*. Once a person accepts the tradition they effectively put their conscience on hold as to what truth is.

When examined the verse context actually supports Sola Scriptura. In v.14 Paul explains he is writing the letter (which is Holy Scripture) so Timothy will know how to *behave* (i.e. orthopraxis)

in the church of God. As Paul is likely to tarry, Timothy will not be able to receive any tradition by word of mouth or face to face, it will grow naturally from the *written instructions* sent by Paul in absentia.

The author makes a number of gross errors on the same page (6), salvation that is granted is *continued* in the Church and (quoting Augustine) that the Church *is* Christ.

The Bible is clear salvation happens at a point in time and once someone is *truly* saved they cannot be un-saved, in the same way a child cannot be unborn. What *truly* saved means is a detailed discussion, suffice it to say God (through his omniscient and eternal perspective) knows those who have had a born-again 'experience' but will eventually have their 'faith'

choked by weeds, or withered in the strong heat of the day due to shallow roots.

For salvation to 'continue' means the work of Christ on the cross was in some way deficient, also the *merit* of one's good works will in some way 'make up the shortfall'. This is a doctrine akin to indulgences, where the superabundant merits of dead saints can be tapped into by the faithful living (via the pope or his prelates). In this case the Christian generates their *own* merit which pays for sins Christ's blood couldn't (!). Isaiah 64.6 is clear, all **our** works [Christian or heathen] are as filthy rags. Of course if they are **God's** works (which Christians have power to walk **in**), they do have merit, however these are not legally able to pay for sin in God's eyes, else Christ could have simply done enough good works Himself and avoided crucifixion.

The Bible clearly says Jesus is the bridegroom and the church is his bride (Ephesians 5.23 and Revelation 19.7) so the Orthodox belief has Christ marrying himself! The statement made the Church cannot exist without Christ is certainly true, but there certainly is Christ outside the Church, as they are two separate things. This may be stretching the author's intention in which case he is merely presenting a tautology of the Church *being the Christians themselves*. Christians naturally have a monopoly on Christ as all other belief systems are false.

The author claims there is no truth outside of the Church (all is 'gold dust in the mud'). On the surface this is also patently false as the Holy Bible *is* the truth and God's words have existed amongst the ungodly for years. In II Kings 22.8 Hilkiah found the Pentateuch in the temple – nobody was reading it yet the words were kept preserved by God's providence. After Ezra the Priest read the book of the law and saw how great the Jews had sinned against it he tore his beard out in repentance! Clearly the truth can live independent of the people of God.

In II Timothy 3.15, notwithstanding his godly upbringing, Paul says to Timothy the *holy scriptures* are able to make him wise unto salvation. Paul doesn't say *the Church* is able to make him wise unto salvation because until he was born again he was not part in it.

The author claims without the Church Christ cannot be known, neither can the Holy Scriptures be understood. To the former it should now be clear

the author does not understand what the Church is, i.e. the sons of God who most certainly are known of Christ. Again, on p.7 it is stated man meets Christ *in* the (true) Church and there is saved. This is a doctrine of apostasy from which heathen 'do church' and engage in religious services believing they are 'right with God'. Pews become filled with false converts walking a feel-good religious road to perdition.

The Bible is clear the Lord *adds* people *to* his Church, i.e., they are saved and added *simultaneously*:

“Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord **added to the church** daily such as should be saved.” **Acts 2.47**

As for the Church being the infallible interpreter of the scriptures:

\*It has already been shown a child [Timothy] was strongly affirmed for having read and understood them on his own, to the saving of his soul.

\*Notwithstanding the teaching knowledge and experience of Elders within the Church, God desires a Church-free relation between Him and His children as to what His words mean:

“Have not **I** written to thee excellent things in counsels and knowledge, That **I** might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth; that thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee?” **Proverbs 22.20-21**

God, speaking in the first person makes it clear the Bible are His words and no infallible 'church interpreter' is to impede Him.

“Howbeit when **he**, the Spirit of truth, is come, **he** will guide you into all truth: for **he** shall not speak of **himself**; but whatsoever **he** shall hear, *that* shall **he** speak: and **he** will shew you things to come.” **John 16.13**

Jesus said **he** (the Holy Ghost) is the one who will lead into all truth. The Lord makes no mention of any infallible 'church interpreter'. To the extent Christians **choose** to be led into all truth by the Spirit they will be.

Again, assuming the author's intended meaning it is true the heathen are unable to discern the Bible as it is a spiritual book, also the Church does

consist of fallible saints.

It is falsely claimed the Bible *is* the Church's book. Every book belongs to its *author* and God, being the author of the Bible, owns His book. He has revealed it to His Church meaning the Bible is a book *for* the Church.

The author gives a definition of heresy as 'nought but removal of the truth' (p.10), and 'ecclesiastical tradition' is then defined as true. This means those who don't believe the truth of 'ecclesiastical tradition' can be charged as 'heretics'. Noting the Jews as ensamples, it is a very dangerous thing to associate tradition with infallible truth:

“And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own **tradition.**” **Mark 7.9**

The gospel is the most glaring and worrying absence in the author's eleven page definition. It fails to mention simple things such as the state of the sinner (bound for hell for breaking God's laws), what Jesus did to pay for their sin (shed his blood on the cross), and that a sinner can be saved by confessing Jesus as Lord and believing God raised Him from the dead.

## **II. What are the reasons for the schism between the churches?**

The claim is made in the first eight centuries of Christendom East and West were united and together fought various heresies, summoning local or Oecumenical Synods of the Church catholic.

The author omits detail of the Culdee Church of the British Isles, subjected to Pope Gregory I's invasion of Augustine [of Canterbury, not Hippo] in 595 A.D<sup>2</sup>, also Christians of Northern Italy and

France which called Rome the Whore of Babylon. Their document, *The Noble Lesson* (c1000AD), claims apostolic tradition as well as exposes false doctrines of Rome right back to Sylvester I (314-335 A.D.)

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<sup>2</sup>See John Hughes, *Horae Brittanicae*, London, 1819, II: pp. 258, 263. The reprisal for British Christian opposition to the Papal yoke at a meeting c602 A.D. was murder at the Battle of Chester/Massacre of Bangor, c. 613 A.D.

The fundamental axiom of synods is “let the opinion of the majority prevail”. The decision-making doctrine is built upon the theology that man and God 'synod' in Christ. Matthew 18.20 is quoted in support of Jesus being present at such meetings although the context of the gathering referred to is for fellowship and worship rather than doctrinal disputations.

From the Western Church's 'love for primacy', cracks began to appear in the Orthodox Church around the ninth century, followed by the West's continual drift further into heresy. The culmination was mutual anathemas pronounced 1054 A.D. at Constantinople by Pope Leo IX and Patriarch Michael Cerularius (in that order).

The footnote on p. 14 gives a theological background to the schism, attributing it to a difference over the 'created energies' of God. Orthodox teaching states “the divine energies are but the external manifestation of God and constitute the basis of mankind's deification” ('theosis'). The Roman doctrine as given by Thomas Aquinas, who in turn relied upon Aristotle [Pagan Greek philosopher, 384-322 B.C.], and Augustine, bifurcates God's uncreated essence/energies and his created energies (i.e. love, grace, peace etc.).

The consequence of this according to Orthodoxy is at base an inaccessible God who only deals with Christians via these created energies. They can never become a 'communicant' of God. The first part of thus Orthodox theology (i.e. external manifestation) is sound and true, however the second is to be met with great caution:

“For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and **ye shall be as gods**, knowing good and evil.” **Genesis 3.5**

A Christian can never be under the impression they can become God, rather they become more Christ-like by living the Christian life. Hopefully this is what 'theosis' in Eastern Orthodoxy means.

Orthodoxy has a doctrine of 'primacy of honour' which is the mention of the first person at a council. From the second Oecumenical Synod (Canon III), the Bishop of Constantinople as Bishop of New Rome is to be given this honour *after* the Bishop of Rome. The schism can be traced to the Roman Catholic push for primacy of *authority*. This innovation (claimed absent from any tradition of the first eight centuries of the Church)

destroys the conciliatory method of church governance.

Even the doctrine of primacy of *honour* is suspect:

“But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues,”

**Matthew 23.5-6**

The 1054 schism can be traced to Pope Nicholas I in 863 A.D., Rome, when he defrocked Patriarch Photius. Nicholas reasoned since the clergy have power above that of politics, the Pope as holding power over the clergy is all-powerful. Nicholas “made himself emperor of the whole world”. In 867 A.D. Photius defrocked Nicholas for this heresy.

Orthodoxy rightly casts down the Papal argument of Peter as the first Pope and the foundation rock of the Church. The second century pseudo-Clementine apocryphal books are used by papists to support this claim. This error is refuted by the author along a number of lines:

\*From the writings of tradition the Church Fathers support without exception opposition to the papist dogma<sup>3</sup>.

\*From the scripture (Matthew 16.16 and I Corinthians 3.10-11) the author reiterates the correct interpretation the rock is metaphorically Peter's confession, and he also alludes to the keys in Matthew 16.19, which is the power from preaching of the Gospel to the unsaved.

\*From history there is no record of the apostolic mission of Peter in Rome, only Paul's. Peter did not exercise any papal power in his ministry in Antioch. The Synod of Jerusalem was led by James, and Peter was rebuked by Paul for his hypocritical behaviour (Galatians 2.11-14).

\*From their own scholar, Swiss Catholic Hans Kung in *Boston Sunday Globe*, 16/11/1980.

After abandoning the spirit of Christ, the author demonstrates how the

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<sup>3</sup>See <http://www.christiantruth.com/articles/mt16.html>, 7.7.13.

papacy sunk into further error with acquisition of temporal power. The papal State (a collection of Italian and French states) was established under Pepin the Short, father of Charlemagne. in [sic] 755. This resulted from an agreement<sup>4</sup> between the two parties regarding the threatening Frankish armies. The papal State was again revived, in 1929, this time by agreement between Pius XI and dictator Mussolini. Pius' reasoning was as follows:

“the representative of God on earth cannot possibly be a citizen of an earthly state”.

The author dismantles this error from scripture, where Jesus himself was taxed in Bethlehem, and also set an example of paying tribute to Government by instructing Peter to take a piece of money from a fish's mouth in Matthew 17.27 for **both** of them. Jesus' kingdom was not of this world, yet the Pope (his supposed vicar) desires the opposite.

Finally, a Bishop [Godet de?] Marais is quoted which summarises the despotic nature of the Roman Catholic religion, “Roman Catholics would be more accurate if, when reciting the Creed, said “and in one Pope” instead of saying “and in one...Church” (p. 25).

The final doctrinal cause given for the schism is the Filioque (pn. Fili 'ɔkwe) which means 'proceeds from the Son'. Citing John 15.26, Orthodoxy dogma says the Spirit only proceeds from the Father, not the Son. This is reflected in the Creed agreed upon in Nicaea in 325 A.D. which only ends with “And in the holy Spirit.” The Holy Spirit has two functions, procession and mission, in the former the source is the Father, the latter the Son. It should be noted the doctrine of the Trinity is unchanged, i.e., (i) the ἐξουσία (exousia) common to each Hypostasis is held by each Hypostasis and (ii) each Hypostasis has individual characteristics specific only to that Hypostasis.

The Western Church is charged with error by insertion in the Nicæan Creed: “who from the Father” *and the Son proceeds*, derived from Augustine of Canterbury's theology that whatever the Father has the Son has also. Patriarch Photius attempts a *reductio ad absurdum* as follows:

A: All things common to the Father and the Son are necessarily common

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<sup>4</sup>More accurately described as fornication, see Revelation 17.2.



to the Spirit.

B: Procession is common to the Father and the Son.

C: The Spirit proceeds from Himself (an absurdity).

A.B-->C

(TRUE.TRUE-->FALSE)

(TRUE-->FALSE), which is always false as a true antecedent never leads to a false consequent

The argument form is sound and given the nature of the Holy Trinity the critical premise of A seems true, meaning the argument as a whole can never be true (i.e. Romanist view is refuted).

The Council of Ephesus' importance (431 A.D.) is explained as article [sic] seven states only the Nicæan Creed is to be used. Any disobedient bishop is to be deposed, or laity member excommunicated. The Council of Chalcedon (451 A.D.) is also cited as support for traditional agreement with the original Creed.

As a hostile witness from Roman Catholicism the author cites Pope Leo III (795-816) who engraved the *original* Creed on silver tablets in Greek and Latin outside the church of St. Peter in Rome. Also, the oldest Latin copies of the acts of the Oecumenical Councils do not contain the addition to the Creed.

As to source documents, the Byzantium Emperor at the Council of Florence pointed out:

“the Latins dispute what is self-evident, and induce the Greeks to agree to what has been anathematized by the Oecumenical Councils. Does not this evince an endeavour to make the one, holy, Catholic Church contradict herself?” (p. 30)

Greek is the original language of all doctrines, translated into Latin, so the author draws the common sense conclusion the Greeks should understand best what was originally written.

In 1009 (leading up to 1054 A.D.) (Frankish) Pope Sergius IV added the Filioque to his enthronement address, and a little later Pope Benedict VIII did so into Church worship. For this confirmed heresy the pope was erased from the diptychs [double-portrait on two doors] of the Orthodox Church.

On p.32 the author puts the strong question to the Western [Roman] Church as to how the Orthodox can accept as legitimate such authoritarian and unilateral changes to dogma, pointing to the Council of Nicaea re: doctrine of the Filioque. The author echoes a claim Roman-Catholicism can be accurately described as the first Protestant church, for protesting against what had already been decided across eight centuries of Oecumenical councils.

### **III. What other differences exist between the churches that keep us separate even now?**

Infallibility is listed first by the author, who misinterprets John 14.6 stating the Truth is *identified* with Christ [here the order of the two is reversed, further, Christ *is* the truth]. A Russian Theologian, Bulgakov, states “infallibility belongs to the Church”, another gross error and blasphemy as no body of Christians has or will ever possess infallibility.

On p.35 it is amazingly argued despite the church fathers never trusting in themselves or a single figure of authority, the Church in the form of Oecumenical Councils *was* infallible and worthy of trust. Again, it should be noted the Church is solely made up of *fallible* men! Matthew 18.20 is again quoted out of context to show Christ's imprimatur on the *result* of a believer's gathering, rather than his presence *with* believers during times of fellowship.

Vatican I in 1870 was further evidence to the Orthodox of the slide of Rome into apostasy with the Doctrine of Papal Infallibility (when speaking *ex cathedra* on matters of faith and morals).

The author uses logic to show the absurdity of an infallible decree coming from a fallible council. According to Vatican I, councils must be implicitly fallible else there would be no need to introduce Papal Infallibility. The problem then comes in trusting the decree of that fallible council (i.e. Vatican I) in deciding *only* popes could be infallible.

To reinforce the primacy of councils, Acts 15 is referred to where Peter, the supposed first pope speaks first, then sentence is decreed by James indicating his pre-eminence (if any) as the decision-maker. The key is consultation of the apostles with the elders (verse 6).

Hostile witnesses of August Bernard Hasler, the Synod of Constantia, Pope Liberius (4<sup>th</sup> century Arian), Pope Zozimus (f. 5<sup>th</sup> century, who denied the doctrine of Original Sin), Pope Virgilius (condemned by a Council in the 6<sup>th</sup> century for errors and accepted his condemnation) and Pope Honorius (a monothelite<sup>5</sup> heretic).

On page 39 it is mentioned a splinter group called the Old Roman Catholics began in Germany after Vatican I for rejecting these heretical doctrines. To summarise, according to Bulgakov the Roman-catholic bishops there “dogmatized and signed an act that is equal to canonical suicide.”

The papal innovation of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception is rightfully denounced by Orthodoxy as heresy and blasphemy against Jesus, who alone was born without a sinful nature. There is no Gospel, Church council or Church Father evidence to support this innovation. It is unclear to the reader whether the Orthodox Church denounces the heresy of the 'Mother of God' or '~~ever~~-Virgin Mary' appellations as found on p. 41.

Next, the two-fold heresy of Purgatory is dealt with. The 'superabundant merits' of dead saints is explained as the foundation of this doctrine. These have the power to forgive the sins of other men (alive, or dead in purgatory) and have been conveniently deposited with the church, to be withdrawn at will by the pope. Of course the dispensation of these merits requires money from the faithful!

The Bible is clear only the blood of Jesus is acceptable payment for sins. Historically, the Pope had power of complete absolution, a bishop fifty days from *temporal* punishment of sin, metropolitans<sup>6</sup> one hundred days, and cardinals two hundred days.

The place of Purgatory is rejected outright in Orthodoxy as the Lord only spoke of an eternal Hell and Heaven and nowhere in between.

Orthodoxy believes erroneously in the divine Eucharist, i.e. that people

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<sup>5</sup>Defined at Constantinople 680 A.D. as a belief in two natures in Christ but only one divine will.

<sup>6</sup>Next highest rank to Patriarch in the Russian Orthodox Church (*Macquarie Dictionary*).

can eat Jesus' body and drink His blood. Ironically, the Jerusalem Oecumenical Council to which the author appeals *forbade* the eating of blood<sup>7</sup>! They use leavened bread which is the claimed tradition, as opposed to Rome which from the eleventh century introduced unleavened bread. Since unleavened bread was eaten with the Passover meal unleavened bread is appropriate during communion.

The Orthodox consecrate the bread and wine by invoking the Holy Spirit whereas Rome does so via the priest (speaking the words of Matthew 26.26-28). Over time they also switched from forbidding the use of wafers, to imposing the use of wafers and forbidding partaking of the chalice.

Finally, Baptism is raised where the correct interpretation of Orthodoxy (complete immersion) is set against Rome's sprinkling or affusion (pouring of water). Orthodoxy do a triple baptism to

symbolise the three-day burial of Jesus. Historically, the baptismal fonts of ancient Italy bear witness to the truth of the Orthodox interpretation.

#### **IV. The Protestants**

As alluded to above, this chapter shows the ignorance of the author on Church history, most likely due to a reliance on what has been written by murderers of Christians (i.e. papists). Protestantism is said to begin with Martin Luther and Rome's selling of indulgences. Luther, Calvin and Zwingli are called faithful Catholic men, yet paradoxically the author says their descendants fell into the same error as the Western Church had 1000 years earlier: "Instead of going back to the ancient and united ecumenical Church, they split into hundreds of denominations".

A number of **strawmen** arguments are then presented regarding 'Protestants':

\*They deny tradition, however Orthodox defines tradition as what it received from the apostles and their 'immediate successors' (p. 46). It simply defines disagreeable Protestant interpretations as non-traditional error!

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<sup>7</sup>Blood is also forbidden by God in the Old Testament both before *and* after the covenant of Moses as well as the after the resurrection in the New Testament (cf. Genesis 9.4, Leviticus 17.10 and Acts 16.29).

\*Each denomination claims infallibility and truth for itself. Any group who does this (including Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, Old Roman-catholicism, etc.) possesses one of the important characteristics of a **cult**.

\*The Branch Theory, i.e. each denomination holds part of the truth.

Regarding holy scripture, Orthodoxy holds a blasphemous view the Canon of scripture was left open until decreed by a Council, also the Bible does not say it is the only inspired written revelation to mankind (the fallacy of arguing from silence).

On page 47 the author makes it plain Orthodoxy holds tradition *above* Holy Scripture, seeing it is because of tradition scripture is even able to be accepted as true to begin with. Jesus said:

“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them and they follow me:” **John**  
**10.27**

The Orthodox doctrine is a great blasphemy for it places the word of man *above* what God has *self-evidently* given to man. A Christian trusts God and His Gospel not because the writings have been verified by councils, but because he is God. The Bible is a list of infallible books, rather than an infallible list of books.

Another lie is the Church existed **before** the scriptures, yet the Tanakh (Hebrew Old Testament) was finished 400 years before Christ was born! We see consistently in the New Testament Jesus and the Apostles referring back to the Old Testament in their witness (e.g. Luke 24.27 and the road to Emmaus, the noble Jews of Berea in Acts 17.10-11). Attempts to uphold tradition as what was preached fall over.

In II Peter 3.15-16, Peter himself witnesses Paul's epistles as scripture, which must have already been in circulation amongst the Churches. In the time of the Apostles therefore **all** of the **Hebrew**-written Old Testament (Genesis to Malachi) and the New Testament *as soon as it was written* became scripture for the Church. From John's Apocalypse c90 A.D. until Nicaea in 325 A.D. there were **235** years of the Christian Church with the Holy Bible.

Orthodoxy believes in a false gospel of faith *plus* works, thus the seeking

of perfection via monasticism and asceticism. These are foolish Galatians who begin in faith but attempt perfection by works! (Galatians 3.3)

The author makes extraordinary claims about 'Protestantism' that betray great ignorance:

\*They keep the 'Filioque' (false, though most would be unaware of the specifics of this theology).

\*Believe the theory of predestination (false - because Orthodoxy is fallaciously implying (man's) free-will and (God's) predestination are mutually exclusive).

\*Abolished fasting (totally false!)

Without biblical support Orthodoxy claim their 'priests' are successors to the apostles! As a Church **office** priests are mentioned **nowhere** in the New Testament so even if the apostles had an unbroken line of successors Biblically they couldn't even be called priests.<sup>8</sup>

Further, the power to bind and loose is interpreted as men forgiving or holding back forgiveness of sins. This is a great blasphemy as only God can forgive sins. The power to bind and loose is the preaching of the Gospel and its power to save for those who hear, and to damn for those who reject (see p. 18). Nobody can have this knowledge or ability to preach without first receiving the Holy Ghost, as the disciples did in John 20.22-23.

Orthodoxy charges Protestants as believing man is saved solely by faith, quoting James 2.14, 26 in opposition. The false Orthodox gospel of works follows the same pattern as Romanism: pit scripture against itself and use out of context proof texts. As this is a doctrine effecting salvation space is worth expending on it.

Firstly, the author (perhaps unintentionally) confuses the *means* of salvation (i.e. God's *grace*) with its *method* (i.e. man's faith)<sup>9</sup>. Secondly, the

<sup>8</sup>Church offices include Apostles, Bishops/Elders/Pastors and Deacons (all reserved for men only).

<sup>9</sup>Cf. Ephesians 2.8 and Romans 3.22.

author implicitly suggests James is speaking of two types of faith ('right' or godly, and dead), exactly what Protestants believe, yet leaves his own argument hanging by (rightly) saying James means 'devout' faith, again exactly what Protestants believe. So it seems Orthodoxy agrees with Protestantism.

Orthodoxy is again found fighting against the Bible by charging Protestants with confessing directly to God without a mediator<sup>10</sup>. Orthodoxy believes in auricular confession as priests can only forgive sins they have been told about (“There is no other way”). To conclude, the author ironically quotes part of Psalm 51.17 where David is confessing his sins *directly to God!* A ridiculous statement is then made, that a “truly humble and contrite man” will confess in front of anyone (this includes heathen people) however the Bible is clear in II Corinthians 6.14 to not be unequally yoked in spiritual matters with unbelievers. For correct doctrine the reader is simply referred to I Timothy 2.5 and I John 1.9.

Next the author again ironically quotes scripture, Galatians 6.14, in support of physically wearing and making the sign of the cross. These are signs *in the flesh* as they are outward signs of supposed faith. In verse 12, Paul writes:

“As many as desire to make a fair **shew** in the **flesh**, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.”

From paying attention to the context the Bible reader can see Paul does **not** advocate outward showings in the flesh, rather to compare those of the law (Jews) as boasters with those of faith (Christians) which **do not** need to portray an outward show. The author should be aware though that nearly all Protestant Church buildings or meeting halls have a visible cross, usually in a prominent position.

In an ad hominem attack the author then conflates heresies of women elders and sodomite marriage with Protestants. The Bible is clear on these issues that those advocating them are against God.

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<sup>10</sup>Protestants *do* have a mediator, Jesus Christ himself!

Finally, in the 'work' of refuting Protestantism the author makes an appeal to the **mystical** nature of religion (to which Protestants pay little regard for good reason). The Bible is the best tool to describe Orthodoxy's appeal to mystery:

“And upon her forehead *was* a name written, **MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.**” **Revelation 17.5**

The author ends by fabricating history with the same desperate defense as Roman Catholicism, that 'Protestantism' did not exist until 1500 A.D. to which any truth-seeking reader is asked to make their own investigation of ample evidence to the contrary.

## **V. What are the presuppositions for a true and godly union**

The book's concluding chapter repeats the same circular argument, that Orthodoxy *is* Truth, then an appeal to jettison 'a priori' interpretations is made to help Christians discover Orthodoxy. Of course, seeing Orthodoxy has already defined itself as the truth it is excepted from this rule, for its 'a priori' interpretations must be accepted as dogma.

The previous 'Branch' theory of 'Protestantism' is then somewhat inverted in suggesting how the West can re-unite with the East. The conditions being the West repent of its heresies (viz. Papal Primacy, Papal Infallibility, temporal power, usage of unleavened bread in the mass, Purgatory, the Immaculate Conception of Mary, Baptismal sprinkling or affusion, Filioque Creedal addition). This should in turn encourage descendants of the Reformers to abjure their heresies and rejoin the West.

The author gives a characterisation of the **two**<sup>11</sup> Catholic churches (p.55). The inferior West is man-focused and power hungry, trusting rationalism, humanism and secular knowledge. In contrast the East is conciliatory and synodal, ever-looking in faith for revelation.

The Eastern way is believed true because it holds the early Councils were divinely-assembled. Orthodoxy Truth then rests on these Councils, and

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<sup>11</sup>Cf. Daniel 2.33, n.b. the word legs.



where Christians point out conflict with the Bible, Council tradition is held as the **final authority**. From p.47, extra-Biblical written revelation is left open in Orthodoxy. This begs the question why Council decisions from the ninth century and onwards cannot also be binding, why stop there?

Orthodoxy effectively believes the 'Canon of Tradition' is now closed. If one was to uphold Tradition as authoritative over the Bible, it is true all Papal innovations are heretical. This is pointed out by various appeal to 'authorities' (First Secretary General of the World Council of Churches Visser T'Hooft, Cardinal Etchegary, and Byzantine historian Stephen Runciman) as well as history (Oecumenical and Local Church council Papal condemnations, corrupt Popes, Council of Florence and the superiority of Greek theology over Latin, Paul II's 1995 admission of fault in *Orientalis Lumen*).

As a warning the author on p. 58 quotes II Peter 3.16 re: twisting scripture, then demonstrates a complete ignorance of scripture re: doctrine of propitiation (payment of sin), giving a dramatic quote from St. John Chrysostom:

“not even the blood of martyrdom can wash away the sin of schism in the Church”

At face value, Chrysostom and Orthodoxy seem unaware 'blood of martyrdom' has no power to wash away *any* sin, this is **only** done by the blood of Jesus, as Hebrews 9.12 says.

In concluding the author makes an insightful observation about the Western church. It is power hungry and man-focused<sup>12</sup> and its doctrines of primacy and infallibility have institutionalised sin. Orthodoxy, not having this centralised power structure has not suffered from the same problem.

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<sup>12</sup>Cf. Matthew 16.23