

The Commandments of Men

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The Apostle Paul teaches that the Holy Scriptures are able to make us “wise unto salvation,” that they are capable of rendering the man of God “thoroughly furnished”; and James speaks of the engrafted word of God as “able to save the soul.”

The true doctrine therefore is that Scripture contains all that is necessary to salvation. What is the doctrine of Romanism on this point? One of the articles of the Council of Trent asserts that, not only should the Old and New Testaments be received with reverence as the word of God, but also “the unwritten traditions which have come down to us, pertaining both to faith and manners, and preserved in the Catholic Church by continual succession.”

In considering this decree, and its fatal effects in exalting mere human traditions to the level of Divine revelation, one is reminded of the solemn words which close the Apocalypse: “If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book.”

Christ taught, on the contrary, that tradition was to be rejected whenever it was opposed to Scripture. “Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?” “In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” “Laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men.” “Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition.”

(Romanism and the Reformation: From the Standpoint of History by Henry Grattan Guinness, 1887, Kindle, Location 1018 & 1029 of 3317, Paragraph Structure Modified)