

“And so, throughout these eighteen hundred years, every successive heresy has generated schism, and every schism has generated heresy; and all alike deny the Divine Voice of the Holy Ghost speaking continuously through the Church; and all alike substitute human opinion for Divine faith.”

We might wonder what it was like in the 1800’s during the thrust of the development and propagation of these false beliefs. Was the Church, the Magisterium, aware of the false teachings that were taking hold? Did anyone oppose them, warn the faithful, try to steer man back on track toward his true destiny? Didn’t *anyone* see what was going on? Was *everyone* mesmerized by the “great” new age of the glorification of man as God?

If there were those who did see and recognize the “development” of these isms first hand, what would it be like to hear from them? What was their firsthand experience, their thoughts, their insights, before these mentalities were taken for granted as something “everybody knows?” Were there such people, or did Satan stand unopposed?

The quote above is from the English Cardinal, Cardinal Henry Edward Manning (1808 – 1892), published in 1861 in an “essay” called: “The Present Crisis in the Holy See, Tested by Prophecy.” In this publication, Cardinal Manning is tracing the buildup of the spirit of the antichrist, spoken of by John, under Divine Inspiration, in his first letter. He had deep insights into the current times. I only recently came across this particular writing of Cardinal Manning, and I am struck by how similar the things he says are to things we have already said in these articles, things learned from the Church. Here is another quote from Cardinal Manning:

“The other result I spoke of as the consequence of the later workings of the heretical spirit is the deification of humanity. This we have before us in two distinct forms, namely, in the Pantheistic and in the Positive philosophies; or rather in the religion of Positivism, the last aberration of Comte.

By “the deification of humanity,” he means making man God. He goes on to tell how Comte brought this about. Recall that Dr Principe laid the development of scientism at the doorstep of Comte.

Considering that Cardinal Manning wrote this essay in 1861, makes the following quote even more striking:

“I do not mean that it [the current revolt against God] has as yet attained its full development, for we shall see reasons to believe that it is still pregnant with a darker future; but even as “the mystery of iniquity has already worked” no other antagonist has as yet gone so deep in undermining the faith of the Christian world.”

Cardinal Manning was right – it had (and has) not yet attained its full development. He was able to foresee, at least shadows, of our current times with relativism and humanism ruling the day. Note especially the Cardinal’s statement that no other antagonist has as yet gone so deeply in undermining the faith. And that was in 1861.

There are a couple of reasons for presenting these quotes from Cardinal Manning as the beginning of a summary of the isms. For one thing, perhaps this historical insight and Cardinal Manning’s striking foresight can help us, in our current time, see through the smothering blanket of these false, antichrist mentalities that have now become so widespread and expressed so casually in everyday life. The great Churchmen of that time already recognized the threat against the supreme fulfillment of man, Heaven.

Secondly, Cardinal Manning, again as early as 1861, foresaw the endpoint of these mentalities – substituting human opinion for Divine faith, the deification of man, the condemnation of God with the concomitant enshrining of man, his opinions and desires, man is god, the supreme decider of what is right and good and true. We return again to the question of: Is Jesus God or not? If He is, then He alone – not me, not you, not popular opinion, not what everybody’s doing, not my desires – is *the* decider of what is right and good and true.

Cardinal Manning has been, by no means, the only one sounding the horn, trying to bring man back from the precipice of his own self-destruction. Pope Pius IX (pope from 1846 to 1878) issued an encyclical listing what he called “The Syllabus of Errors,” warning the faithful about these movements. You might recall the words of Pope Leo XIII (pope from 1878 to 1903) from a previous article: “No poison is more fatal to divine faith than

the subtle and insidious spread of rationalism.” Leo’s immediate successor was Pope St Pius X who named the synthesis of all of these errors “Modernism” and again warned man against shunning God in favor of his own self-glorification. Our Lord sent His Mother to Fatima, and confirmed the apparitions with an undeniable, stupendous sign, to turn man back from the “errors of Russia,” the principal error being materialism. Pope Pius XI promulgated the Solemnity of Christ the King in 1925 precisely in response to this rising spirit of the antichrist. Is Christ King or is man? Is Christ King or am I or the world or popular opinion? In more recent times, Pope St John Paul II repeatedly decried what he called practical materialism. Pope Benedict XVI repeatedly brought to the world’s attention what he called “The Dictatorship of Relativism.” **God sent His messengers, Heaven has spoken, are we willing to listen?** Is God good? Is God truthful? Or is Satan? You have to decide. To ignore the issue is a decision to accept the “spirit of the world.” The Lord *is* guiding His Church, providing a bastion, a safe-haven, for those who wish to abide with Him, if only man will embrace it.

What has been the purpose of these articles, the purpose of making these false beliefs explicit? It is very simply the salvation of souls. Getting to Heaven (salvation) is a matter of forging relation with God in this life and this world. Whether or not this is accomplished depends most basically of all on what a person holds to be true. It is not enough to say: Jesus, Jesus I believe – our Lord Himself told us so: Not everyone who says ‘Lord, Lord’ will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Belief is a matter of knowing, down to your core, that Christ is King, what He says goes; He is the ultimate good and there is no other. Knowing this down to your core means that it now affects what I do, how I speak, how I act, what I think, indeed – what I am. It is not enough, and in fact is entirely wrong, to create some image of our Lord in my own mind, using my own desires, and declaring I love that image – an image that is bound to look a lot like me. Christ is King means that *He* says who He is, not me. It is not enough to judge myself as being nice and that Heaven will be lucky to have me and that others should conform themselves to me; in fact, that is the very belief the spirit of the antichrist wishes you to embrace.

The modern false beliefs, beliefs leading to the glorification of man – man becomes “god” – is a very wide branch onto the broad path to perdition which, our Lord tells us, many choose. Such beliefs are now widely held by modern man. You do not need to be a self-proclaimed atheist to hold them as true, think in terms of them, and live by them, thus going farther and farther away from our Lord. We are surrounded by these mentalities and absorb them without even really realizing it. They are drilled into our minds in countless ways. The goal of these articles was not to teach these false beliefs but rather to make them explicit.

In a sense, we have barely scratched the surface of the history of this buildup of the spirit of the antichrist that has really taken hold over (at least) the last 2 centuries. There are many more “players” and various other isms that we have not mentioned. In many cases, even for the ones that have been touched on (especially humanism) we have barely scratched the surface. The hope here, though, is that these mentalities have at least been sufficiently exposed now so that you can begin to recognize them when you see them – interiorly and exteriorly – reject them, and teach the young to do the same. Begin to especially recognize – in your conversations, in what you read or hear – how often these mentalities are now brought even into the human dimension of the Church. How many put what God has revealed and the Church’s discipline above their own “opinion” or desire? The number is getting fewer & fewer.

Since the space is limited here, next week’s article will go directly into a summary of the isms covered in these articles.

God bless you, Fr Kuhn.