

Why I Am Not A Roman Catholic

By Charles B. Lefevre



PROBABLY many have seen a tract duly authorized by the Roman Catholic Church, and also published in newspapers, with the title, "Why I am not a Protestant," and some people have asked me to give an answer to it. As a literary work it makes one think of the builders of the tower of Babel, in their confusion of tongues. It is so full of equivocations, partial truths, and false interpretations of the Bible, that it would require a good-sized book to expose all of its errors and sophistries, and to refute its deceptions. Therefore in reply to its "twenty...and more reasons," it will be more profitable to give as many and more reasons why I am not a Roman Catholic.

1. BECAUSE I am a "Christian Catholic," (not a Roman Catholic), and belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, who has saved me, and to whom I owe perfect obedience. Therefore, I have nothing to do with Rome, nor the Roman hierarchy. Jesus said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father, but by me" (Joh 14:6). Thus, in Christ, I have access to God the Father, the essential and necessary truth, and eternal life.

2. BECAUSE the Church of Rome is not the Church that Christ said He would build (Matt 16:18). Christ founded His one, holy, Catholic Church in Jerusalem, by the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and not in the city of Rome. Rome at that time was a pagan and idolatrous city without one Christian in it.

3. BECAUSE the Church of Rome is not the one true Church of Jesus Christ, His mystical body, the spiritual and invisible church, and the one living organism of which Christ is the Head forever. The Roman Church is a visible church organization founded by men, and of which the Pope of Rome is the head. The fact that there are two distinct heads is proof that we are treating of two distinct bodies, as no normal body can have two heads at the same time. Christ being the Head of His Church, it cannot have the Pope for her head.

4. BECAUSE the Roman Church claims to be founded on Peter. But Christ never said that He would found His Church on "Petros" or Peter, which means a moveable stone, but upon "Petra," which means the firm or living rock. The

Divine Christ, confessed by Peter and the other apostles, is the living Rock and foundation of the Christian Church. The Apostle Paul said: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1Co 3:11). Christ is "the foundation of the apostles and prophets" (Eph 2:20). And without this foundation the true Christian Church does not exist.

5. BECAUSE the Church of Rome, in spite of her proud claim, is not the true Catholic Church. The word "catholic" means "universal," and therefore, to be the Christian Catholic Church, it must include all who belong to the mystical or spiritual body of Christ. But there have been and are, millions of Christians who have never known the Romanized Church nor her claims. Only the spiritual, invisible, and mystical body of Christ can be the Catholic Church in the true sense of the word "catholic." But the Roman Church is limited to only those who recognize the authority of the Roman hierarchy.

6. BECAUSE the Roman Church claims supremacy and authority over the faith and conduct of her faithful, such as the apostles never claimed. Christ did not give special authority to one apostle over the others (Mat 18:15-17; Mar 9:35-40), and when they sought special privileges, He reproved them for their pride and selfishness (Mat 20:20-27). He told them, "One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren" (Mat 23:8). And even until the night in which Christ was delivered up to die, they contended between themselves "which of them should be accounted the greatest" (Luk 22:24-26). The Roman Church pretends that in the restoration of Peter to the apostleship, which he had cowardly denied three times and even with an oath, the Lord gave him authority above the other apostles. But all that He charged him with was nothing more than is the duty of every pastor of a church. And besides, any power that Christ granted to an apostle was given as a personal endowment, and therefore was not transferable. Special spiritual gifts and blessings cannot be transmitted by inheritance or human donation, as if they were personal or material property. Therefore no supposed "successor" of Peter can exercise supernatural or divine powers, by succession. Christ is the Head or Captain of His Church, and when the Captain commands, the sailors are expected to obey, and not to command. Moreover, Peter did not claim any authority or supremacy over the other apostles, but rather to the contrary, he was sent to them (Act 8:14). And it was not he who pronounced the verdict to the first Church council in Jerusalem, but James (Act 15:13-20). And when Paul saw that Peter "walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel," he "withstood him to the face" before them all, "because he was to be blamed" (Gal 2:11-14). And in referring to himself, Peter said: "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder," without any pretence of authority, and he exhorted them, "Feed the flock of God which is among you...Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock" (1Pe 5:1-3). God ordained Paul to the apostleship without asking permission of Peter, as He has also ordained many thousands of pastors and evangelists since then without consulting the Pope of Rome.

7. BECAUSE the Church of Rome is not apostolical. Since the fifth century, in many ways, it has departed from the simple and humble practices and

doctrines of the primitive and apostolical Church, and has followed other practices as in the case of baptism, the Lord's Supper, and so on; and has added dogmas, sacraments, and a sumptuous pomp, which the apostles of the Lord never taught or practiced. Thus instead of limiting itself to apostolic doctrines, the Roman Church is following traditions accumulated during the centuries.

8. BECAUSE the Roman Church was not founded by the Lord Jesus Christ. There were many other Christian churches throughout Judea, Galilee, Samaria, and those of Galatia, Macedonia, and Asia (Act 9:31; 1Co 16:1; 2Co 8:1; Rev 1:4, 11). These were equally founded by the apostles and were just as apostolic as the church at Rome, most of them having been founded even before that of Rome. The important fact is, that no one single church, constitutes the one, true, and Catholic Church.

9. BECAUSE the Roman Church does not properly distinguish between the visible or organized church, and the invisible or mystical body of which Christ is the Head. The visible or organized churches admit of plurality, as is often seen in the New Testament. But the spiritual or invisible Church does not admit in any way of plurality, as bodies or brides and wives of Christ, but always in the singular, as body (1Co 12:27; Col 1:18,) and bride of Christ (Rev 19:7, 8; 21:2, 9). Therefore, no visible or organized Church, as the Church of Rome, can be the only true and spiritual Church founded by Christ.

10. BECAUSE the Roman Church makes a false claim when it says that the Pope of Rome is the head of the only true Church of Christ. When God established His people Israel in the promised land, He didn't place any man as king or head over them (Jdg 17:6; 18:1). But God raised up judges according to His own will, because He Himself was to be their King and Head (1Sa 8:5-7). In the same way, Christ did not establish any man as Pope or Head over His one spiritual Church, because He Himself was its Head (Eph 1:22, 23; Col 1:18). But as the Israelites demanded and placed a human king over themselves, contrary to the will of God, so the Roman Church, not satisfied to be under the authority of Christ, has placed over itself the "Most Holy Father," a human Pope, as their supreme head, contrary to the will of Christ, who is Himself the Head over the truly Catholic Church of Christ.

11. BECAUSE the Roman Church does not permit Christians to seek and follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Paul said: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom 8:14). But the Church of Rome demands that all its faithful must follow blindly the interpretation of the Bible that the Pope and his hierarchy have defined. Thus the Pope, by his pretended "infallibility," an attribute of Omniscient Deity, puts himself in the place of the Holy Spirit.

12. BECAUSE of the attitude of the Roman Church toward the sacred Scriptures. It condemns and prohibits the reading of what it calls the "Protestant Bible," even as a mortal sin. But the Protestant Bible does not contain anything that is not also in the Catholic Bible. It is the Church of

Rome that has “falsified” and “adulterated” the Scriptures by additions and books which do not pretend divine inspiration, and that were never authorized by Christ or the apostles. It has also added many notes which often serve to pervert the truth rather than to explain it.

13. BECAUSE the Roman Church is guilty of having caused great divisions in the Church of Christ, by adding to the teachings of the Bible and changing its practices of those of the primitive and apostolic church. Having departed from the Sacred Scriptures as the only rule of faith and practice, and following the traditions and dogmas of men, it has provoked divisions that make it almost impossible to maintain the spiritual unity for which Christ prayed, until it repents of its apostasy and returns again to the Word of God.

14. BECAUSE the Roman Church has made many changes in its dogmas and practices during the centuries. At one time various Popes condemned as a great sacrilege, to serve only the bread in the Holy Communion, but since the year 1415 that practice has been established and approved by the papacy. During the centuries it has added a number of dogmas and practices that were not known by the apostles. For example, in less than 100 years, it has declared three new dogmas: the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, in 1854; the Infallibility of the Pope, in 1870; and the Assumption of Mary in 1950. But the Church of Jesus Christ holds the same doctrines and faith as are in the Word of God, since the first century of the Christian era until today.

15. BECAUSE the Roman Church wants to oblige all to accept its dogmas and particular interpretations of the Bible, by force if necessary, even though they may be contrary to sound reasoning, to the testimony of the senses and the general teaching of Scriptures. Take for instance the dogma of “Transubstantiation”—that in eating the consecrated bread or “host,” one is eating literally and truly the actual flesh and blood of the living Christ, an interpretation as absurd as the materialistic interpretation of Nicodemus regarding the new birth (Joh 3:3, 4). The Bible clearly teaches that Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven, as our Intercessor and Advocate, until He returns again. To worship the “Host,” as the Roman Catholic does, is to worship a god made of flour, and by man.

16. BECAUSE the Roman Church does not allow liberty of conscience or of worship, wherever it has the power to prevent it, and tries even by civil power to compel all to be subject to its authority. God grants full liberty to all, providing they do not interfere with the rights of others. He not only gives to every individual the right to read and study the Bible for himself, but exhorts us to do so, and pronounces a blessing upon those who do (Joh 5:39; Act 17:11; Rev 1:3).

17. BECAUSE the Roman Church claims that the Pope is the Vicar or Representative of Christ here on earth. But Christ announced that He would send the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, in His place (Joh 14:16-17; 16:7-15). Christ said: “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Mat 18:20). That does not mean that He will only be

with the hierarchy of some church, but with all His own. This is fulfilled in the person of the Holy Spirit. The Pope cannot be in every place, as Christ has promised to be.

18. BECAUSE the Church of Rome exalts human beings with titles, offices, and honors that belong only to God, and the Savior Jesus Christ. For example, she has given to the Pope the title and place of Pontiff or High Priest. The word "pontiff" is of Latin origin, and means "making a bridge." As the high priest of the Old Testament served as a mediator between God and men, so the Pope places himself as a bridge or mediator between God and man, or the bridge or mediator between God and the sinner. But the Word of God now recognizes only one High Priest or Pontiff between God and men, "the man Christ Jesus," who made the expiation of our sins once forever by the sacrifice of Himself on the cross of Calvary. It needs never to be repeated or continued (Joh 14:6; 1Ti 2:5-6).

19. BECAUSE the Roman Church renders religious worship to the "saints" and their images, praying to them, and often honoring them more than they honor Christ. This may be seen in many publications devoted to their worship. Moreover, it pretends great distinctions between "adoration" and "veneration." But the word translated worship or "adoration" means outward homage, which may be either civil or religious, such as to bow down to or to kneel before, while "veneration" is interior and means "to pray" or invoke in prayer. As a result of the sophistry of the Roman Church, great multitudes of her faithful have been deceived and are guilty of the terrible sin of idolatry, which will bring them to everlasting perdition. The word "idolatry" means worship of images. Christ said: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve," or render religious worship. The Roman Church tries to deny the fact that in its worship of "saints" and images, it is guilty of idolatry. But why has it omitted the second commandment of the Decalogue, and made two of the last commandment?

20. BECAUSE the church of Rome has not shown the Spirit of Christ. The Apostle Paul says: "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom 8:9). The Lord Jesus was kind, loving, and never persecuted the person of anyone, even though they were in error. But the Roman Church has cruelly persecuted a great many Christians, simply because they did not submit to her domination.

21. BECAUSE the Roman Church claims to save souls by means of sacraments, prayers, and masses. But the Church of Christ and the Word of God offer salvation only by grace, through faith in the perfect expiatory work of Christ. Such a salvation produces true love to God, good works to please Him, and gratitude and praise to God for His goodness (Eph 2:8-9; Rom 5:1; Eph 1:6-7).

22. BECAUSE the Roman Church depreciates the efficacy of the expiatory work of Christ, demanding acts of penance in satisfaction to God for sins committed, as if the sacrifice of Christ was insufficient, and the sinner had to

add to the “finished” work of Christ on Calvary. What God demands is not acts of penance, but repentance, which means turning from sin, vices, injustice, and all wickedness (Isa 55:7; Mat 9:13; 1Co 6:9-11). All the pretended indulgences are founded on clever sophistries, but without any foundation in the Word of God.

23. BECAUSE the Roman Church falsely claims the power to forgive sins committed against God. It is a self-evident fact that only the person offended is able to forgive the offense. The Lord Jesus clearly showed that only He who could say to a paralytic, “Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thy house” (Mat 9:2-7), has the power to forgive sins, as the one is as easy to do as the other. Moreover, the Lord taught us to pray to “our Father which art in heaven” for forgiveness of “our debts.” Jesus declares it to be the prerogative of God to forgive or not to forgive sins (Mat 6:9-15). The act of forgiving is by the nature of the case a power that cannot be delegated to another.

24. BECAUSE the Roman Church with all its sacraments and masses, would not be able to give greater peace, joy, and certainty of forgiveness of sins and eternal life, than the true believer can now have by faith in the Gospel of the grace of God in Christ Jesus (Joh 5:24; 1Jo 5:11-13).

25. BECAUSE the Roman Church leaves its faithful at the hour of death in a supposed “purgatory,” in order to be purified indefinitely by means of the most horrible torments, and dependent on prayers and masses. But we know that God saves souls by grace alone, through Christ (Eph 1:7). Rome has also invented a “limbo” in which to cast the innocent who have not received what she calls “baptism,” as though a righteous and loving God would reject them for such a reason, notwithstanding the fact that Christ died for them (Joh 1:29; Mat 18:14). But the true Church of God leaves her faithful at the hour of death with Christ in glory, as His blood has cleansed them from all sin (2Co 5:6-8; Phi 1:21-23).

26. BECAUSE the Church of Rome bears so many signs of apostasy, as it was foretold by the apostles. They prophesied of some who would depart from the faith, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared (1Ti 4:1,2). Thus the priests claim to have the power to forgive sins, and to convert bread into the living body of Christ, “forbidding to marry,” as in the case of priests, monks and nuns. Yet God has instituted marriage (1Ti 3:1-4, 12; Heb 13:4), and He made the marriage of priests in the Old Testament practically obligatory, as the priesthood was to be perpetuated in their descendants.

There are many other Christian reasons that might be given for not being a Roman Catholic, but these ought to be sufficient for those who are interested in seeking to know the truth as revealed in the Scriptures. As the Apostle John has stated: “These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name” (Joh 20:31). We know that we were not redeemed with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ (1Pe 1:18-19).

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