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An Open Letter To Anita [or Andy]

Dear Anita,

Knowing your personal relationship with Jesus Christ, your belief that Roman Catholicism is Christian disturbs me deeply. You point to their doctrine of the Trinity as evidence they are orthodox Christians. My in-laws are adamant Catholics. Although my father-in-law only participates in Catholic rituals sporadically, he is certain that Catholicism is the only true "Faith". We do not discuss religion - not at all. He is not rational when he is contradicted. This is an enlightening idea: Catholic "faith" is not rational, and easily converts into hatred in the face of contradiction! But, this is not the basis of my assertion that the Catholic "faith" is the largest cult in the world.

Before I go into details, let me continue and lead into my first point by referring again to my in-laws. They frequently refer to their "faith". As one listens to them, one becomes aware that the faith of a "good" Catholic is in the "church" and its authority and teachings. Personal faith in Jesus Christ is not only unknown to them, it is irrelevant.

When you seriously examine the Catholic "faith", Anita, you will learn that there is an irreconcilable difference between the Catholics and Protestants, especially the evangelicals. It is the issue of spiritual authority.

Anita, the Roman Catholics reject the primacy of the authority of Scriptures. For Catholics, the "church", its doctrines, teachings, traditions, and their interpretations of Scripture alone is authoritative. They deride and ridicule and mock and jeer the concept of *sola scriptura* (Martin Luther's principle of Scripture alone being authoritative in matters of faith). Consequently, there is no mutual point of agreement between Roman Catholics and evangelicals regarding spiritual authority and salvation. I shall explain this.

First, permit me to give a thumbnail sketch on the issue of the revelation and interpretation of the Scriptures. God did not have His revelation recorded in some heavenly nor mystical language. Instead, the New Testament was preserved in the everyday trade language of the Middle East and the Roman Empire at the time of Christ: Koine Greek. And, the Old Testament had already been translated into Greek during the Inter-testamental period, because so many Jews had been scattered throughout the Greek world and hellenized: been enculturated with the Greek culture.

All of the Biblical material is recorded in ordinary grammatical and literary forms. Thus, all these forms can be easily identified and interpreted according to ordinary usage of language: nouns; verbs; adjectives; adverbs; contrast; cause-and-effect; repetition; poetry; letters; parables; metaphors; similes; apocalyptic literature; and much more. My reason for giving this information will soon be clarified.

So, as long as one correctly identifies the grammar, literary form, colloquialisms, and historical context, one can understand the literal meaning of Scripture. In other words, anyone with a classical liberal arts education can understand what the Bible says, with the aid of a handbook on the customs and culture of biblical times. This assumes such a person will remember to interpret metaphors, similes and apocalyptic passages as metaphors, similes and apocalyptic literature. (The Catholic tradition violates these principles quite capriciously and erratically. More on this later.)

Now, permit me to briefly state my specific reasons for saying the Catholic "faith" is heresy and a cult. I will give details explaining my objections after the specific outline.

1. According to Catholicism, Salvation is through membership in the Catholic "church" and participation in its sacraments (baptism, Eucharis), which are "means of grace".

2. Jesus never established the papacy, nor did Peter ever claim to be a pope.
3. The Catholics teach the bread and wine of the "mass" (Lord's Supper) become the actual body and blood of Jesus, which impart "eternal" life to all who ingest it.
4. The Catholics teach their followers to "worship" (venerate = worship) Mary, and to pray to her as their "Mediatix".
5. Catholics teach their members that Mary is the "mother of God".
6. Catholics teach that Mary and her parents were born without sin, nor with "original sin".
7. Catholics elevate their traditions and interpretations of Scripture above the authority of the plain teaching of Scripture.
8. Roman Catholicism has established a privileged hierarchy of "priests" who hear confession, assign punishment and participate in exclusive acts of "worship".
9. Catholics teach their members to call their "priests" Father in direct violation of the teachings of Jesus ([Matthew 23.9](#)).
10. Catholics believe that the basic sin nature of men cannot be changed, not even through being "born again". In fact, salvation is never certain for members of the Catholic "faith", even after a lifetime of participating in its rituals and sacraments - one still must rely upon one's family to *pay* to have them prayed out of purgatory after they die!
11. All this control and manipulation through heightened guilt, unbiblical authoritarianism, claims of special revelation: these are primary tactics and indicators of a cult.
12. The Holy Spirit is relegated to the actions of the Catholic "church" and its human authorities alone, especially the Pope - this is blasphemy.
13. Catholics sacrifice Jesus again and again and again, daily, around the world, in the "mass".
14. Because Catholic "faith" is based in secular philosophy, they accept syncretism (incorporation of incompatible elements) of their "faith" with pagan religions. Consequently, the majority of Roman Catholics in Haiti are voodoo worshippers. After a Saturday night of drunken orgies worshipping Satan, they are permitted and encouraged to receive the "body of Christ" in the "mass" on Sunday morning.

Now, Anita, anyone of these points seriously contradicts the teachings of Jesus and Scripture. Several of them, by themselves, constitute outright heresy and blasphemy, and give additional identification of Roman Catholicism as a cult.

You see my hesitancy to refer to Roman Catholicism as a church. This is because they have so twisted and distorted and defamed the Church of Jesus Christ.

I am going to give a deeper analysis of each objection I have listed. Let me encourage you to study this material seriously. The Bereans demonstrated true nobility by "examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were true." (Acts 17.11) Ignorance of the Truth is not an acceptable excuse before God. Neither is inconvenience an excuse for ignorance. Believers are accountable for the hope within them, and are to be ready to explain that hope, and identify the false.

Your daughter has been very efficiently brain-washed by the Catholics on the deeply emotional power of *tradition*. And, this tradition is correct in her mind merely because they have said so and claim 2000 years of tradition and passed down authority. Objective analysis of history destroys their claims of tradition and authority, however. And, on, the spiritual void she lives in, for lack of knowing God in Christ Jesus, which alone gives Eternal Life ([John 17.2](#)).

Salvation by Works

Which leads us right into the first objection I listed. The Catholics teach salvation only comes through membership in their organization and participation in their rituals and acceptance of their belief system. Now, many say Roman Catholicism is not so bad - they are Trinitarian and oppose abortion, after all! But, all cults embrace some aspects of Truth. In fact, they go out of their way to look like the real thing. But, it is not the correctness of certain parts of their dogma which identifies them, but the heresies they teach which damn them.

For, it is faith in Christ alone, knowing Him as He is, and living according to His character born in us which saves

us, and proves our salvation. Jesus never commended his disciples for believing in an organization. He never taught that observing religious rituals imparted salvation.

The demons "believe" in Jesus and know who He is. But, they are unchanged in their nature and activity, and thus are damned. Many do MIGHTY works in Jesus' name, but do not know Him. Even certain Televangelists. Jesus said He shall reject them because He never knew them.

So, if one has faith in a tradition, or an organization; if one does everything such a tradition or organization teaches; and if they are quite sincere in their beliefs and efforts, yet they do not KNOW Jesus, they have no hope of Eternal Life. I do not have to take the heat for this teaching, it is Jesus' teaching. He said He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Not an organization, nor religious activity, nor certain doctrines. To know Him is to have fellowship with Him in the Spirit, and to manifest His character.

The Papa: Pope

The second objection: the papacy. Peter never claimed to be "Pope". Paul never acknowledged any superior position of Peter, either. In fact, Paul chastised Peter on at least one occasion.

Furthermore, Paul is never contradicted in his assertion that Peter is the "apostle" to the Jews, and he, Paul, the "apostle" to the Gentiles ([Galatians 2.8](#)). So, if Peter is a "pope", he should be head of a group of Jewish converts only, and his true "apostolic" descendants would likewise be composed of Jewish believers! (This is a bit of absurdity just to illustrate the absurdity of the Catholic tradition.)

Roman Catholicism finds basis for their "pope" in Matthew 16.13 - 19. Here, they say, Jesus was teaching He would build His Church on Peter, as the "rock". Yet, Peter himself opposes this interpretation in his own writings, stating that Jesus alone is the Cornerstone ([1 Peter 2.4 - 8](#)). And, the rock in Matthew 16 is the revelation that Jesus is the Christ! This is the only sound interpretation of the passage.

Furthermore, the Catholics claim that the keys given to Peter are symbolic of total authority, so Peter was given authority to develop, bend and construct new doctrine, even if such developments contradict the teaching of Jesus. (The churches of Christ, non-denominational, non-instrumental, teach this nonsense also.) In truth, these keys are culturally symbolic of stewardship, not authority.

Contextually, we know that the interpretation of the keys should be that of stewardship, too. Matthew 8 clearly teaches the reality of delegated authority to the apostles and believers. John 14.25 and 15.4 plainly teaches even the apostles their work and teaching must be in total accord with the work and teaching of Jesus Himself. No one has been given permission to create nor change a doctrine Jesus gave.

We are stewards. No believer or apostle has authority when their teaching differs from the teachings of Jesus. It is clear the Catholics, who claim they "wrote the Book", are quite distorted and confused in their interpretations of the Book.

"Eating" Eternal Life

Thirdly, Anita, these Catholics teach the bread and wine of the "mass" become the literal body and blood of Jesus Christ. Additionally, ingesting these "magically changed" elements supposedly imparts "eternal" life. At this one point, one ought to immediately ask: If "eternal" life is imparted through the elements of the "mass", why does one have to repeat the process ad infinitum?!!!

The Truth is the Lord's Supper is a simple ceremony of remembrance (1 Corinthians 11). Jesus wants us to remember what He did for us, for we have not saved ourselves. The Lord's Supper does not impart any saving grace. To claim it does is to assert the death of Jesus was not itself completely effectual for our salvation: that more effort is required. Such a position is heresy.

The Catholics attempt to claim biblical grounds for transubstantiation (doctrine claiming "magical-mystical" change of the bread and blood into the actual physical body of Jesus Christ). Their prooftext is [John 6.35, 54 - 58](#). However to demand Jesus' statements here refer to His physical being is to ignore the context and the reality that He is speaking metaphorically.

First, in John 6.27, Jesus contrasts perishable bread with eternal bread. In verse 32 (which sets context of the

following passage), Jesus points to heavenly, spiritual food in contrast to the bread Moses found in the wilderness. That physical bread given to Moses spoiled overnight!

So, this is the context of verses 35, 54 - 58. He is referring to His true nature, Spirit! He is not speaking of cannibalism, not even "spiritual" cannibalism. He is speaking of internalizing Eternal Life in the Spirit.

In John 4.24, Jesus makes it clear that His true nature is Spirit. John 14.10 makes it clear that Jesus IS God.

The position here is not making a claim that material/physical bodies are evil nor any less than real. Jesus had a real, physical body. But, that physical body perished until it was resurrected by the power of the Holy Spirit. What is real in the real bread is participation in His eternal reality - Spirit!

How many thousands of people are permitted (and even encouraged) by Roman Catholicism to continue to live in sin, then come to "mass" to receive the "body of Christ" for eternal life? Over and over and over again...? What a terrible state of darkness to be brain-washed by such teaching.

Worshipping Mary

Of all the false doctrines and traditions of Catholicism, the doctrine of Mary is one which best demonstrates Roman Catholicism's syncretism with pagan beliefs. Marianism is one of the most disturbing of Catholic heresies, to me personally.

At the Council of Ephesus in A.D.431, Mary was declared to be the mother of God as well as the mother of Jesus. Understand, it took the "church" nearly four centuries after the apostles to come to this position. This is clear evidence of corruption of Truth.

I am dealing with all three of my stated objections to Marian doctrine in one. And, you should know that I have found the majority of this material in a textbook my wife was given in Catholic school for religion - catechism - class. I am not looking at some biased evangelical interpreter; I am reporting to you what Catholicism teaches its own young minds.

Catholicism teaches its members to "venerate" Mary. According to my thesaurus, venerate is synonymous with: deify; ennoble; enshrine; glorify; idolize; immortalize; revere; and worship. So, it is no misinterpretation to say that Catholics teach their members to worship Mary. Now, in their material, they try to redefine the word venerate a bit lower than worship, but in practice, they belie their semantical tricks.

Because, Catholics observe four feasts of Mary each year: annunciation; purification; assumption; and nativity of Mary. Yes, the Catholics believe that Mary ascended into heaven, just like Jesus. Her body never was buried, and she never died, according to these cultish heretics.

The "Ave, Maria" is a song of worship to Mary. The worship of Mary springs from a very warped interpretation of Elizabeth's greeting to Mary in Luke 1. Because Elizabeth recognized that Mary had been chosen to fulfill prophecy does not give license to mean that Mary had been deified. Mary had no greater role in the coming of the Messiah than did the prophet Isaiah. None.

Now, to say that Mary is the "Mother" of God is blasphemy. God is eternal and infinite. He has no parents nor creator. Jesus pre-existed His physical body eternally.

This is such warped garbage that I wonder at the tolerance of even Evangelical Christians who try to accept Roman Catholicism as Christian. It is as wrong as Watchtower (Jehovah's Witnesses) doctrine. It is as heretical as Mormonism. In fact, upon studying Catholicism, one wonders if Mormonism wasn't "birthed" by the same doctrinal parents! Of course, I am saying that their origins are demonic. They certainly are not apostolic, nor of the Holy Spirit.

Continuing on the Marian heresy. Catholics teach their members that Mary is their "Mediatrice". They believe that Jesus is too busy with the great problems of the world to be bothered with our trivial problems, so Catholics must pray to Mary, who will intercede on our behalf. GARBAGE!!!!

[1 Timothy 2.5](#): For there is ONE God and ONE mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

[Romans 8.34](#): Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus who died - more than that, who was raised to life - is at

the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

Finally, we must deal with the "immaculate conception". For a long time I misunderstood the immaculate conception doctrine of the Roman Catholics. When I read it in a textbook written by Catholics for 7th grade catechism, I was stunned. What the Catholics teach is that Mary was born sinless, untouched by "original sin". Not only that, they also believe her parents were also born sinless!

This may not mean much to you, since you have no great theological training. But, for me, this was an eye-opener as to the depth of the darkness of the Roman Catholic "light". First, if it is necessary that Mary's parents were born without sin, then ALL of her ancestors needed to be born untouched by Adam's sin. This would constitute a new race, unrelated to Adam!

Second, the Bible never teaches that the "virgin" would be born sinless, simply that she would be born a virgin. And, God's revelation clearly teaches that Jesus had brothers. Now, either Joseph was a bigamist, or God was mistaken when he used the word "brother", or the Roman OverLords are unadulterated liars. For, they also teach that Mary remains "perpetually virgin".

This is bizarre as well as heresy. Why would any true believer acknowledge any such system of teaching as having origins in Jesus Christ?

Usurped Authority

Roman Catholicism elevates its traditions, doctrines and interpretations of Scripture above the authority of Scripture itself. I recently read a bumper sticker which read: The Church wrote The Book. It identified the "Church" as the Roman Catholic Church. Yet, "their" Book cannot be interpreted according to ordinary rules of grammar and semantics and literature, if you believe Catholics. When it is convenient to them, they interpret passages "spiritually" to defend their traditions. At other points, without textual indicators to change literary form, they interpret passages literally, even when the text may indicate a metaphor is being used (John 6, for example).

So, if Catholics wrote the "Book", they should have destroyed it rather than looking like a bunch of deranged mystery religion writers. In truth, the Book was not written by the Roman Catholics. Roman Catholicism was not even a formalized system (institution) until at least 300 years after the time of Christ. Rather, Roman Catholicism is a result of human traditions resulting from twisted interpretations of the Book. The Book pre-dates the Roman tradition by 150 - 300 years!

The specific traditions and doctrines which they have wrongly elevated above the authority of plain Scriptural teaching are those we are listing here in our objections, plus a few which we believe are important, but we do not want to address. Why? They are highly emotional issues of a secondary nature, which may obscure the truth of our main objections against Catholicism.

By the way, are you aware that Catholicism has 13 "rites", with differences comparable to the differences between Protestant denominations. Some rites permit their priests to marry. Some use icons rather than statues. And, many are ethnically oriented.

Priests and Penance

Roman Catholicism maintains a special hierarchy of priests. These priests hear confessions and assign penance. They have special privileges not permitted to "lay" Catholics.

This "priesthood" violates several teachings of Jesus Christ and the Book: a) servanthood: "Jesus called them together and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave - just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'" Matthew 21.25 - 28; b) assigning penances: synonyms for penance include: cost; discipline; fine; payment; penalty; punishment; reparation: God's Word says: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1.9. There is no charge nor punishment after the fact, for Jesus Christ paid our debt in full 2000 years ago!

Moreover, it is impossible for people to make payment for their sin, for we either accept Jesus' payment for

salvation, or we do not receive salvation from God: "This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for ALL have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through redemption that came by Jesus Christ. God presented Him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in His blood." Romans 3.22 - 25.

c) confession for saving forgiveness is to God alone, not to any human intermediary; d) these tactics of confession to a priest who assigns penance are control and manipulation tactics which are primary indicators of a cult. This is also accomplished in a very heightened continuing context of guilt which aids the manipulative aspect of the authoritarianism of these "priests".

It is appropriate here to address how the form of worship and priesthood of Catholicism came about in such a manner so different from Evangelical worship. The reason is the biblical model chosen. Catholicism incorrectly models itself on Temple worship. Thus, the "mass" is indeed the "sacrifice" of a temple form of worship. And, it accounts for the existence of the priesthood in Catholicism.

If the Letter to the Hebrews did not exist in Scriptures, it would be harder to explain how wrong it is for any Christian worship and ministry to follow the Temple model. But, we do have a clear report in Jesus death at Calvary that Temple worship was ended: "And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, He gave up His spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom." [Matthew 27.50,51](#). This curtain was that which separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies in the Temple. Only the High Priest was permitted into the Holy of Holies, once each year at Yom Kippur.

Because the curtain was torn from top to bottom, God Himself did the tearing. The curtain was over twenty feet tall. The tearing of the curtain signified Christ's making it possible for believers to go directly into God's presence, thus ending Temple worship, and representative worship (priests) forever. Read [Hebrews 9.1 - 22](#) for further understanding.

The Christian form of worship is based upon synagogue worship. Synagogue worship developed during the "diaspora" when the Jews were dispersed by foreign powers. During the Inter-Testamental Period (between the Old and New Testaments, a period of approximately 400 years before Christ), synagogue worship evolved among Jews who were exiled, and forbidden to participate in their Temple oblations.

Synagogue worship consisted of singing psalms, reading and expounding the Scriptures, and prayers! Imagine that! This is the precise components of Evangelical worship services, minus the Lord's Supper, which Jesus instituted as His only liturgical component!

I keep saying Evangelical worship, for many Protestant worship services are liturgical. Meaning they are tepid, watered-down imitations of the Roman Catholic model! The Episcopalians are just "protestantized" Catholics! Even the Lutheran tradition has reverted to emulating the Catholic cult in many of its congregations.

Impotent Salvation

Roman Catholicism believes that "salvation" cannot change the basic sin nature of humans, and that "salvation" is a process - lifelong - attained through membership in Catholicism and participation in its rituals: water baptism; confirmation; the "mass"; and "last rites".

Yet, even after all this, one must be prayed out of purgatory, at the expense of one's surviving relatives! Manipulation? Guilt? Control? One is never certain of one's salvation according to the teachings of Catholicism. This is one of the primary indicators that Catholicism is a cult. No wonder so few "Catholic" men actively participate in the rituals of their "Faith". It is impotent and manipulative.

Claims of extra-biblical Special Revelation

The Catholic tradition claims the right to form new doctrine and re-interpret the Bible and the teachings of Jesus. This claim for authority is based, according to them, on the "keys to the Kingdom" referenced in Matthew 16. Because they interpret this to mean Peter was given total authority for Christ's Church, and because they claim Peter was made "Pope" of Christ's Church, and because they claim the Pope is always the direct "descendant" of Peter's "papacy", they claim the Pope has the right to re-interpret Scripture and establish doctrine, along with the council of bishops.

Well, special revelation claims are another key indicator of cults. And, we have already shown the error of their claims to this authority, and how it contradicts plain meaning of Scripture.

These special revelations have given the "Church" is greater powers of control and manipulation over its members.

Making the Holy Spirit Impotent

The Holy Spirit is relegated to the actions of the Roman "Church" hierarchy, and the *ex cathedra* pronouncements of the Pope. According to Catholicism, the Holy Spirit does not guide believers personally. And, even if He does, one must adhere to the more "sure" guidance of the "mother Church".

"And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor - to be with you forever - the Spirit of truth." John 14.16,17. "But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you." John 14.26. "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on His own; He will speak only what He hears, and He will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you." John 16.13,14.

The Catholic tradition has set itself up as a higher authority than the Holy Spirit. And, has made itself the only voice of the Holy Spirit. This is blasphemy. Let all Christians understand the Truth and say: "Amen".

Re-sacrificing Jesus Daily

Roman Catholicism re-sacrifices Jesus Christ daily in countless "masses" worldwide. Yes, they claim it is a "bloodless" sacrifice, yet they cannot deny they are sacrificing Jesus over and over and over and over... This is outright heresy.

"Unlike other high priests, He does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when He offered Himself. For the law appoints as high priests men who are weak; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, Who has been made perfect forever." Hebrews 7.27,28.

It is recognized that Jesus crucifixion at Calvary was an act of sin by sinful people. Therefore, Christians must recognize that the re-sacrifice of Jesus Christ is also a sinful act against God in Christ Jesus. His work is perfect and complete and does not need the assistance nor embellishment of human minds and hands! Jesus said: "It is finished".

Fellowship with Paganism

Finally, we come to the issue of syncretism by the Catholic tradition. Syncretism is the synthesis and incorporation of unrelated elements into one system.

Because Catholic "faith is based in secular philosophy and unbiblical mystery religions, they accept adaption of their "faith" to pagan religions. Consequently, the majority of Catholics in Haiti are voodoo worshippers. After a Saturday night of drunken orgies - worshipping Satan - they are permitted to receive the "body of Christ" in the "mass" on Sunday morning.

Catholicism is tolerant of pagan practices by their members in all parts of the world where they have "converted" pagan people. After all, they "philosophize" "all cultures embrace elements of God's Truth!" However, this is just plain warped and heretical application of cross-cultural communication of the Gospel and respecting foreign cultures. Respect of customs and cultures of other peoples must never tolerate violation of God's eternal Holiness.

There are many other elements of Catholicism we could discuss and critique, with just cause and ample refutation, such as praying to saints and making of "graven images": statues. However, those objections are hackneyed and emotionally volatile, even though they are valid indicators of heresy. I have focused upon these specific objections, because they are the strongest indicators of the cult nature of Catholicism, and its violence to Scripture.

I trust you will carefully and prayerfully examine what I have presented, and permit the Holy Spirit to use you to

minister to those who have been fooled by and darkened in their minds by the Roman Catholic teachings. "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." John 3.16. "But these things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name." John 20.31.

The Power of Tradition

The power of tradition on the human psyche is inestimable. The majority of people view tradition as highly authoritative. Most accept the authority of tradition without examining it critically. And, these people are very leery of people who criticize tradition, or believe its claims should be verified. After all, it is tradition.

Biblical archaeology has discovered copies of the New Testament Scriptures from as early as 150 - 200 A.D. These discoveries have consistently verified that there have been no substantial changes or mistakes made in copying the New Testament over the past 1900 years.

Yet, the New Testament record refutes the claims of Catholicism. And, historical evidence, such as the Council of Ephesus in A.D. 431, verifies that doctrines and traditions of Catholicism HAVE evolved and changed over the past 1900 years. Therefore, every claim made by Roman Catholicism which varies with the Biblical record is suspect. And, each additional variation undermines the claims of authority made by Roman Catholicism. This cannot be emphasized sufficiently.

There are MANY more variances between Catholicism and Scripture besides the ones I have listed. There is the problem of the Apocrypha, the extra-canonical and fanciful books found in the Catholic Bible, but not in the Protestant version. There is the problem of votive candles, and having to purchase them as a means of improving the effectiveness of one's prayers. And, I have also mentioned, in passing, the problems of statues and praying to "saints".

Purgatory is not a biblical concept, nor is limbo. Again, I am asserting that these traditions have all developed as means of manipulating and "fleecing" gullible people who are well-intentioned, but are susceptible to the power of tradition. Rome has become excessively wealthy as a result of its power over its members.

Another source of power and authority is the appeal to popularity. It is abundantly clear that the worldwide membership of Roman Catholicism exceeds the membership of all Protestant Christian "members". However, if one appeals to popularity as a means of proof of Truth and validity, then one must recognize that three fifths of the world's population does NOT adhere to Christianity. So, if popularity demonstrates validity, then paganism is truer than Catholicism or evangelical Christianity. Think about it!

Protestant Failures and Errors There are indeed failures and errors in the Protestant Evangelical tradition. Here are the main ones: "private faith"; "private interpretation"; failure in unity of practice; failure in mutual submission as the Body of Christ; and failure to rightly emphasize and depend upon the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

Out of the doctrine of the "priesthood of all believers", there has been erroneous application and interpretation. One of these is the concept of "private faith". Many people believe that what they believe and how they live is a private matter between them and God. This violates the unified witness of Scriptures regarding God's call to "community", exemplified in the concept of the Body of Christ in Paul's writings in Scripture. We are not just accountable to God in a private manner, we are accountable to God in a communal manner also.

Our faith must be manifested corporately with other believers, and in unity with other believers, or it is an invalid faith. "to prepare God's people (plural) for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." Ephesians 4.12,13.

In other words, either we journey together, or we are on the wrong road!

Second is the matter of private interpretation of Scripture. Because of a mis-application of 1 John 2.27: "As for you, the anointing you received from Him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as His anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit - just as it has taught you, remain in Him."

This passage is not teaching the irrelevance of Pastors and Apostles and Teachers. If so, then it contradicts [Ephesians 4.11ff](#). And Scripture does not contradict Scripture, it interprets itself. So, the existence of Ephesians 4.11 tells us that 1 John 2.27 does not mean that we do not need Bible teachers and expositors. It does not give us proof that we are able to make whatever interpretation of Scripture we arrive at "anointed".

No, the context of this passage is the purpose of John writing this letter: to combat Gnosticism, a heresy that was already trying to invade Christianity during the lives of the Apostles. And, Gnosticism claimed they had "special revelation" and "special knowledge" to interpret God's Truth. Thus, they were teaching that only spirit is holy, and that all material is evil. And that since the body is material, it is evil, and thus, living a sinless life in the body is impossible, etc. They also claimed they alone knew how to progress in spiritual knowledge from our corrupted state to a purer state of spirituality. THIS is the teachers John was inveighing against, not Pastors and Bible Teachers.

Now, if there is not an objective, universal means of interpreting Scripture, and an objective, universal interpretation, then ANY interpretation is valid. However, this leads to chaos and anarchy and cultism - imagine that!

But, if there IS an objective, universal means of interpreting Scripture, then there is NO private interpretation, just as there is no private faith. You choose: Truth, or relativism? And, I gave the primary principles for interpreting Scripture at the beginning of this letter.

The Evangelical failure to arrive at unity in the faith is a combination of all the problems I am addressing in this section, plus some other things. For, one, there is division over non-essential matters. Non-essential matters are those which have nothing to do with saving Faith and practice, such as church government, infant baptism, liturgy, and applied holiness based upon personal and cultural preferences. Also, matters of eschatology unnecessarily divide the Body of Christ. Many claim that what we believe about the future Last Days can effect one's salvation. Bunk!

Many Protestants are more loyal to their "church" than to Jesus Christ. Some Protestants are more loyal to their Church's doctrine than to Jesus Christ. Many Fundamentalists are more loyal to the Book, or a particular translation of the Book than to Jesus Christ. Some Christians are legalists. Others are licentious. Others are Protestant traditionalists. Some view their faith more as a means of meeting with a certain group of people - like a country club - rather than seeking to know God in Christ Jesus.

Some Christians believe that Christianity is evidenced in materialistic blessings. Others find evidence of their "faith" in emotional experiences. None of these disproves the Truth of Jesus' teachings. The question is not Catholicism or Protestantism; nor which Protestant denomination. What we are enjoined to pursue is Truth in Christ Jesus. Most divisions in matters of doctrine are the result of hermeneutics (principles of interpretation of Scripture). Most of these hermeneutics are not objective (inductive) interpretations, but subjective (deductive) principles. In other words, they are a reading into Scripture according to one's preconceived notions! Calvin's TULIP view of salvation is not found in the Bible. Neither are Dispensationalism's claims. Many claims of "literal" interpretation are actually "letteral", ignoring the unified revelation of Scripture.

The invasion of philosophy and logic into theology cannot be overlooked. This is what caused Calvin to form his "system" of theological interpretation, plus his training in law became a subjective filter for his understanding of Scripture. Philosophy and logic and law do not interpret Scripture, Scripture interprets philosophy and logic and law!

An additional, crucial reason why there are such diverse interpretations of Scripture among Protestants is the sidelining of the importance of the Person and work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus taught that our ultimate authority as believers is the Holy Spirit. Yet, most Christians follow the Book and its principles, rather than entering into fellowship with Jesus by His Holy Spirit, and permitting Him to lead us into all Truth. The Holy Spirit will never contradict God's revelation in Scripture, but following the principles in Scripture is dead works and does not equate with walking in and living by the Holy Spirit. Re-read the Scriptures cited in the section on "Making the Holy Spirit Impotent". And, the re-read Galatians 4 and 5, to see the proper placement of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church and believers.

The issue of mutual submission as members of the Body of Christ has been particularly corrupted by our

American culture. In particular, the concept of "rugged individualism" and "individual rights" shape our thinking, and we have permitted this to corrupt our view of Christianity. We must remember that our freedom is Christ is freedom FROM sin, not freedom TO sin, especially in our responsibility as members of the Body. Mutual submission is required for mutual encouragement and strength and correction. Salvation can never be rightly understood and applied apart from the context of Relationship. Salvation is inseparable from relationship with God, and its application is inseparable from relationship with all other believers - the members of the Body of Christ.

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