

Why I Became A Protestant

by

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CHAPTER THREE

UNITY

In order to know which is the true Church, four marks are named by which the true Church is distinguished from those which are not.

It must be: one, holy, catholic and apostolic.

Only one Church, the true Church, can have them all.

But the most characteristic of the true Church is unity.

The Catholics say that the Roman Church is the only one that has the four marks, especially that of unity; a single flock and a single shepherd.

The other churches have many flocks and many shepherds.

So then, the true Church is the Roman Catholic Church.

To this we reply:

If one looks at Christianity sincerely and without preconceived ideas, it has never been one. Paul was already complaining that some said, “**I am of Paul . . . I of Apollos . . . I of Peter . . . Is Jesus Christ divided?**” asked Paul.

From the first centuries there were schisms and what they called heresies. Note that these heresies were not from outside the Church. They were born within it, and members of the Church of Christ itself defended them.

So that one can say that the Church of Jesus Christ has never yet formed a single flock and a single pastor, with that unity which Jesus Christ wanted, patterned after the union between the Father and the Son. It is said, “Actually there is only one Church which has a single shepherd and a single flock: the Roman Catholic Church.”

Pure sophistry! All the churches can also say that they are one, the same as the Catholic Church, and that they have a single Shepherd, who is the one with most authority.

Even in Protestantism, which seems the most divided, each church is one. The Lutheran is one, the Calvinistic one, the Anglican one, the Methodist one.

They answer, "But they all belong to Protestantism, and so we say that it is divided."

That is right. But one should not forget that they all, together with the Catholic, belong to the "Christian" church, which, for those who are not Christians, is divided as no other religion.

Those who throw it in the face of Protestantism that it is divided ought to think that with more reason the same accusation can be thrown in the face of Christianity, since it is the most divided religion.

A Buddhist or a Mohammedan could say, pointing to the Christians: "Do you change? Then you are not the truth."

You see then that this rhetorical argument, which became so noted on the lips of Bossuet, is a two-edged weapon and argues nothing against Protestantism.

How shall we know, then, which is the true religion or Church among so many?

Not by the mark of unity, for they all have it, but by the number and quality of Christian characters it contains.

The one which lives a doctrine nearest to the contained in the holy Gospel of Christ will be the true one.

Not because it is one, but because it is ONE WITH CHRIST.

~ end of chapter 3 ~

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