

Why I Became A Protestant

by

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CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

With what has been said in the previous chapters the reader can see the inconsistency of Catholic dogma and why I do not believe in them.

But even if these were the reason which made me decide to leave Catholicism, they do not explain what it is that I accepted in its place.

I want to explain this also as the conclusion of this pamphlet.

We have an immortal soul, and at birth this terrible dilemma is set before us: "Either salvation or everlasting damnation."

It is not enough, then, to *leave* a teaching; it is necessary to accept the true one.

Leaving Catholicism is the first step of the one who longs to live fully in the Truth; but it is necessary to take the second one, if one wants to be saved forevermore. It is necessary to be born again (John 3:7).

This second step I also took.

It is customary to hear among Catholics that the one who leaves Catholicism doesn't know where to take refuge. It cost me thirteen years to find the Truth from within Catholicism, but on leaving I found immediately where to take refuge.

Where? In the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In Matthew 1:21 we read:

"Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins."

And in the Acts of the Apostles (4:12) we read:

“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

And in Luke 7:48 we discover a Pharisee who criticized Jesus because He received the Magdalene who anointed His feet. She was a public sinner; the Pharisee was publicly religious, but he did not stand justified in Christ Jesus. He did not find salvation in that moment. On the other hand, the sinful woman heard from the lips of Jesus: **“Thy sins are forgiven.”**

And as Jesus saw that those who were eating with Him were doubting, He gave the reason for the justification of Magdalene: **“Thy faith hath saved thee: go in peace”** (see Luke 7:47-50).

But in Catholicism they taught me from my earliest days that the work that one accomplishes IS what saves or condemns; that our salvation depends on ourselves; that devotions are necessary; to the Virgin whose devotion they say is the sure pledge of salvation; to the saints with novenas and medallions; to the dead with suffrages; to the Church, giving money to celebrate masses, buying bulls and begging indulgences, and so on.

This made me doubt. It disturbed me.

But again I opened the Holy Scripture and heard Jesus Christ saying to the greatest sinners: **“Thy sins are forgiven thee.”**

And I exclaimed: “But this thief is not baptized!”

In spite of it Jesus Christ says to him: **“Today shalt thou be with me in paradise”** (Luke 23:43).

And I exclaimed: “But this strumpet hasn’t made confession of her sins!”

In spite of it Jesus says to her: **“Thy sins are forgiven”** (Luke 7:48).

And I insisted, “But she doesn’t invoke the Virgin nor expect from her the salvation of her soul!”

Yet Jesus declared: **“He that believeth in me shall never die.” “I am the way . . . no man cometh unto the Father, but by me”** (John 14:6).

And I continued reading the Apostles: **“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him”** (John 3:36).

“God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life” (I John 5:11, 12).

“But what of good works?” I replied. “What works did the thief perform who was dying with Jesus on Calvary?” responded the Gospel.

“What works did the prodigal son carry out so that his Father would accept him as his son?”

“To them that believe on his name gave he power to become the sons of God; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (see John 1:12-14).

The twenty-three years of intense Catholic training had left a profound mark, and the anguishing doubt grew less, but did not cease.

“Works! The need for works! The sanctifying efficacy of the works appointed by the law!”

This tortured me.

I had left my family and all that I had in the world. I had renounced everything with a vow of poverty, chastity and obedience to a religious order. I had done penance, long hours of prayer; I have preached Christian doctrine according to the strictest Catholic orthodoxy; I had given myself over to a faithful observance of the rules of my orders . . .

Was not this enough to justify me? Could I await death and judgment peacefully in this way?

Again I opened the Scriptures and found Paul’s response to my agonizing question:

Philippians 3:4-10

“If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death”

My heart beat vehemently, but my mind was enlightened and peace entered within me.

“If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain” (Galatians 2:21).

Galatians 3:1-3

And I seemed to see Paul addressing me, repeating his apostrophes to the Galatians:

“O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?”

“But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith” (Galatians 3:11).

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law” (Galatians 3:13).

“Then,” I went on asking, “the external works ordered by the law, do they justify, or are they useless?”

Galatians 3:23-26)

“But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus”

Good works are pleasing to God. We ought to do them out of gratitude, to please Him and to become like Him. But they are not the cause of justification. Only the merits of Jesus are of infinitely justifying value.

Now all that was left was for me to accept Christ as my Redeemer, and believe in the saving efficacy of His Cross. My sins are pardoned!

My debt, contracted with the heavenly Father, paid!

Faith in Christ the Saviour was the only thing which could justify my soul. I accepted! I believed!

From that moment I felt that Jesus Christ was fulfilling in me His Word: **“He that believeth on me . . . out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water”** (John 7:38)

~ end of chapter 7 ~

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