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C/O Harvest House Publishers
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RE: Comments on *Protestants & Catholics: Do They Now Agree?*

Dear Dr. Ankerberg:

Your new book *Protestants & Catholics* caught my eye as I passed the bookshelf in our local Bible Book Store. After purchasing the book, I took it home, sat down on my soft couch, and thumbed through the pages to get an overall feel of the work before jumping right in. I looked forward to reading the book. I only have a few minutes available today, and I'm going to try and get a quick letter off to you-to relay my comments.

I have recently purchased Dave Hunt's book *A Woman Rides the Beast*, and McCarthy's book *The Gospel According to Rome*. I am very interested in this topic, which will become obvious as you read my letter. But to save you time I will get right into a few observations. I pass them on in respect for the amount of time and energy that I know you must have invested in this book.

A Quotation from the Pope

When I flipped open the book, after getting comfortable, this was the very first thing that grabbed my attention. You use a quotation from the Pope in the chapter entitled *Redefining Biblical Words* on page 114. To establish the context you seem to be making the point that Catholics redefine biblical words based on their ancient tradition. You say, "*Catholic theology goes on to teach that the works which come after God infuses grace, though inspired by grace, are also what help to save a person. As Pope John Paul II emphasizes, 'Man is justified by works and not by faith alone.'*" (Endnote 1)

What is your point in attributing these words to Pope John Paul II? Is he saying something unbiblical? Are you aware that he is reciting a *direct quotation from Scripture*? In James 2:24 we read, "*Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.*" (KJV) In criticizing his words aren't you criticizing the original inspired author? Why not add some context to his statement, not just his citation of Scripture, so we can get the gist of what he is saying?

How can you criticize John Paul II for saying this, when he is taking it directly from Scripture? You are implying that his words and teaching comprise an unbiblical teaching, when in reality, if your readers are biblically literate, they will realize that the Pope was quoting Scripture! Were you unaware that this verse was in the Bible? Obviously you aren't since you use it freely on page 31. You may want to correct this blunder in your book. Such things damage one's credibility and hurt the cause.

Faith Alone and the Apostle James

My browsing also showed that in the same chapter, *The Apostle James*, you address the arguments of justification by "faith alone," centering on Abraham's faith in Genesis 15:6. Perfect

place to direct the reader's attention. The Scriptures say that "*Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.*" I think that Catholics agree with this Scripture, don't they? By the way, are you aware that the same words ("*it was reckoned to him as righteousness*") are applied to another person in the Old Testament besides Abraham, but that the "justification" was attributed to actions and zealotry, not *faith alone*? This is a troubling verse. While most commentators seem to skip right over this verse, some try to attribute it to the person's faith, but unfortunately the Psalmist does not say that. To save you a little time, the phrase used in Psalm 106:31 is exactly the same (in both the Hebrew Masoretic text and the Greek Septuagint) as is used in Genesis 15:6. In Psalm 106:30, 31 we read,

"Then stood up Phinehas, and executed judgment: and so the plague was stayed. And that was counted unto him for righteousness unto all generations for evermore." (KJV)

Curious verse, eh? I know, we say it was his *faith* that made him justified, like his father Abraham, but the Psalmist must not have understood the *faith alone* gospel, for he attributes the imputation of righteousness to Phinehas' zealotry. Girdlestone, in his Synonyms of the Old Testament (MI: Eerdmans, 1897, 1974) writes, "*It is not a little remarkable that the privilege thus granted to Abraham was accorded to another person in exactly the same terms, but apparently on a different ground.*" p. 163

I have to be honest with you - found your chapter on James very disappointing. You carefully make the point that the word "justify" really means "vindicate," and that "vindicate" has nothing to do with salvation, but has to do with the proving of the believer's *faith* - Abraham's faith. You really should have addressed the major weakness of this perspective: it is not the *faith* that is being justified by works - it is the *man*. How can we justify this? If our theory holds true shouldn't we read, "*Was not Abraham our father's faith justified (vindicated) by works?*" making it clear that it is his faith, and not his person. Instead we read, unfortunately, "*Was not Abraham our father justified by works?*" This observation does not set well with our interpretation. In your book you say that it is always the *faith* that is proven by works, whereas the Apostle James seems to say it is the *person*. We should try to figure out how James could have worded this passage more carefully so Catholics don't get the wrong idea and misunderstand the gospel.

You also say in your book (p. 37) that "*Paul is writing about a person being justified before God, while James is writing about a man being justified before men. Men cannot see another person's heart as God can.*" Somehow we have to be more careful in this theory, or else we end up scratching a few verses out of the story of Abraham in Genesis. Was it *men* who were testing Abraham's faith? The book of Genesis says, no. It was God who was testing Abraham in Genesis 22, not men. You write that James is referring to justification before men (p. 37), because God can already see the heart. I noticed in reading *James & Peter*, by Harry Ironside, that he agrees with you on this point. But the problem seems to be that it was *God* who was testing Abraham in Genesis, because Moses wrote, "*Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham . . .*" (Gen. 22:1) Notice it was not men who were finding out what was in Abraham's heart - whether he had true faith - it was God.

Then we learn that Abraham passed God's test of faith. "*For now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.*" (Gen. 22:12) And again, "*By Myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son, indeed I will greatly bless you.*" (Gen. 22:16, 17) Do you think the Catholic won't notice that even though God could see Abraham's heart, He had to test Abraham to see if he had real faith. God says to Abraham, "*Now I know . . .*," seeming to imply He didn't know earlier. Couldn't God tell if Abraham had saving faith by looking at his heart? Didn't He know if Abraham had saving faith, once and for all, before the test? It was God who, according to your "legal imputation" theory, saw Abraham's saving faith in Gen. 15:6, so why did he have to see *if* it was genuine faith in Genesis 22 by staging this dramatic and heart wrenching test - as you say, "*thirty years later?*" Do you think James really understood the book of Genesis? Maybe he read it wrong - those things happen you know.

The next problem that presents itself with our Fundamentalist interpretation is that there were no men around to be vindicated in front of - this was strictly between God and Abraham. Our position, that this justification was "*justification before men,*" seems to be at odds with the whole of Scripture, and if so, it holds no water, leaving us vulnerable. This great test of faith took place far from civilization - a three day's journey to Mount Moriah - where Christ would someday become the Lamb of sacrifice. (Endnote 2). Genesis 22:3-6 tells us,

"So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son; and he split wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. On the third day Abraham raised his eyes and saw the place from a distance. And Abraham said to his young men, >Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship and return to you. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son, and he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together."

We don't see crowds of people gathered around Abraham on Mount Moriah, as we do with Elijah on Mount Carmel. This test was strictly between God and Abraham - and God tested Abraham's faith. If He already knew Abraham had saving faith, why did He put him through such a cruel experiment? Allah, of the Moslem's is capricious, not the God of the Jews. Your chapter *The Apostle James* doesn't give a biblically-literate Catholic any challenge at all. Even I was very disappointed, and to be honest, I wish you'd of done a better job.

When Was Abraham Saved?

On page 37 you write that "*Paul appeals to Abraham in Genesis 15, stating that Abraham was justified the moment he believed in God.*" The Catholic may wonder where Abraham was really saved, and if it was from believing in God, or in Christ. Maybe in you next printing you should revise your book a bit to address this issue. It seems the Genesis record is not real clear as to when Abraham was really saved, and the writer of Hebrews appears unclear as well. They should have both spoken with Paul who could have cleared it up for them.

In order to have a good explanation when talking with Catholics, you should help your readers pin point the moment when Abraham *believed?* Since this was such a momentous

occasion in the history of mankind, and in the drama of salvation history, it should be clearly shown *when* Abraham actually believed and was reckoned as righteous - from unbelief to belief, from no faith to real faith.

We know that Paul quotes from Genesis 15, but is that where Abraham first *believed* God? The first time he had *faith*? What about in Genesis 12? Doesn't Hebrews 11:8 tell us, "**By faith** Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. (KJV). Was this some other kind of faith? We see here an obedience based on faith. He built altars to God on the plain of Moreh (Gn. 12:6,7), in Bethel (Gn. 12:8), and Hebron (Gn. 13:18). During this time **by faith** "he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10). What makes this confusing is that it takes place *before* his justification in Genesis 15. There were many years, probably more than ten years, between his first mentioned demonstration of saving faith and the subsequent declaration of righteous in Genesis 15. At what point did his faith save him? or was it a process of faith and obedience? Protestants need to make sure they are clear on this for discussions with Catholics, since the Catholics seem to have a point sometimes.

Further, in the Christian context, justification is seen as the entrance into the New Covenant, the kingdom of God's dear Son. When did God give Abraham the sign of the covenant? In Genesis 12 when he first believed at 75 years old? In Genesis 15 when it says he acquired imputed righteousness? or in Genesis 17 when he was ninety-nine years old?

God established His covenant with Abraham in Genesis 17. The sign of the covenant was circumcision. Abraham was justified by faith, but what would have happened if he had refused to obey and cut off his foreskin? What would his status have been before God then? Would his obedience (good works) or disobedience have entered into the equation? What if Abraham had refused to sacrifice his son?

Then again James comes into the picture with another reference to Abraham (which we have already discussed) and seemingly another perspective on Abraham's righteousness. James thinks Abraham was not justified in Genesis 15 *or* 17, but much later in Genesis 22, when he offered up Isaac. He states, "*Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?* (James 2:21, KJV). And then James is bold enough to say, "*So you see, a man is justified by his works, and not by faith alone.*" (James 2:24) I can really understand why Martin Luther disliked James, called it the "epistle of straw," and relegated it to the back his translation, since it did not belong with the inspired books.

Our dilemma is rather serious This story of Abraham does not seem as neatly packaged as Luther and Evangelicals would like to have it. We need to get this ironed out if we are going to really be effective.

Somehow the argument Paul is making in Romans has been squeezed into the framework of the Protestant and Catholic debate. The Jews were not content to let Gentiles *just become* Christians by faith. After all, Jesus was sent to the Jews. He was the Jewish Messiah. The Jews of that time considered it a logical necessity therefore, for the Gentiles to first convert and obey Jewish laws and customs, and bear the mark of the covenant, before being allowed to follow the

Jewish Messiah. They had to obey and comply with the OLD TESTAMENT laws and customs first. In other words, the Judaizers were trying to make Gentiles become “Jews” first, before they became Christians. They were saying one became a Christian by observing all the laws of the Jewish religion. Paul was not arguing salvation by *faith* vs. *faith plus obedience*! He was saying, “Did Abraham become righteous by circumcision and obedience to the Ten Commandments? No, he was reckoned as righteous way before these things existed. How was he made righteous? By believing God while virtually in the state of being a Gentile, why? Because there were no Jews yet, no law yet, no circumcision yet. If Abraham was right before God before the Law, why is it impossible for the Gentile to be right for God apart from works of the Law?

Abraham was justified as a Gentile (non-Jew) and did not have to become a Jew first, before he could be justified in God’s eyes. Now, these Gentile converts, how could they become justified? Did they have to get circumcised and follow all the Jewish legal and ceremonial laws before God would justify them? Did they have to become Jews to become Christians? No, they could be justified just like Abraham was - by faith. James then elaborates what faith is, and the crucial element of obedience (works), as does John in his first epistle. We need to make this clear if we are going to argue well with the Catholic! The Catholic vs. Protestant argument, the *faith* vs. *faith and obedience* debate, had absolutely nothing to do with the discussion Paul was having with the Jewish Christians in Rome and Galatia. You need to show your readers how very important the historical context is.

Catholics Tainted with Tradition

Also, while skimming the book I noticed that you say Catholics read the Bible tainted by their ancient traditions, and in so doing, they don’t allow the Bible to speak for itself. You then seem to imply that Protestants have no distinct tradition through which they filter the Scripture. Am I understanding you correctly? Catholics, who usually have a pretty good grasp of history, will tend to think you are naive on this point. As an Evangelical for 39 years, I know of very few honest Evangelicals who won’t acknowledge that we *also* have a tradition through which we read the Bible and understand Christian theology.

Just as there are no completely objective journalists (though most in the liberal press will disagree), no one can come to the Bible completely objective. To be honest and maintain our credibility, you should have mentioned this fact in your book. Instead of trying to make it seem one-sided, and coming across as disingenuous, you should have admitted that Evangelical Protestants also approach history, the Bible, and theology with a certain Fundamentalist tradition. Since the Bible is not as perspicuous as we sometimes think (as is proven by the thousands of different interpretations by good meaning, sincere folks) (Endnote 3) people approach it with their own biases, as you have clearly demonstrated in your book. But the dilemma of Protestantism is that “*the Protestants are also split—by the incoherence of their own teaching that proclaims individual reading of Scripture as the highest authority, and at the same time imposing their views as correct.*” Even within Protestantism we lack any overarching coherence. (4)

The Mass

Next, I flipped to page 81 where I think you seriously misrepresent the Catholic position regarding the Mass. Catholics will listen to you if you are honest and correctly represent their

position. But, if you only caricature the Catholic teaching, they will rightly dismiss you as uneducated, or uninterested in the truth. It would be best if you give the honest position of the Catholic Church and deal with it squarely, instead of setting up straw men that are easily demolished. The Catholic Church does not teach that Christ is re-sacrificed on the altar. Why do you try to say that they do? The quotation you use from the *Catholic Encyclopedia* does not use the word “re-sacrifice,” yet you paraphrase it in your own words, saying it teaches “re-sacrificing.” Words are important and smart Catholics will catch on to what you are doing - playing footloose with the terminology to suit your interests. The Catholic Church teaches exactly the opposite, and you as a scholar should know that. Christ was sacrificed once for all, as Hebrews clearly tells us, and He does not need to come down and get crucified every day.

Catholics teach that there was only one sacrifice, and that the Mass is a representation of that sacrifice, a partaking in, and of, the one sacrifice - the eating of the Lamb (Ex. 12:11; John 6:52-58). There are not *many* sacrifices - only one. Catholics teach that the Mass is a taking part of the *one* sacrifice, the sacrifice on Calvary. Notice however, that we see Christ before the throne of God in Rev. 5:6, forever presented as a “*lamb as though slain*” (the Greek perfect tense). The Apostle John tells us the Lamb *was* slain, but is still on the altar before the throne of God. (5) So we have another anomaly: Christ seated at the right hand of the Father, and Christ, the Lamb of God standing on the Altar.(5) In the temporal world, He was slain once, but in heaven, the world outside time, it appears that the sacrifice of Christ is an eternal event. We are even told that He was crucified *before* the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8).

Let’s take a close look: when was Christ crucified, 1) “before the foundation of the world,” 2) in 30 AD, or 3) as the “*Lamb standing as though slain*” presented in eternity future? The Catholic simply sees the Mass as a partaking of that eternal event. It brings that eternal event into their very presence. It transports them into heaven to see, experience and partake of the eternal liturgy going on before God’s very throne. Catholics wonder why Evangelicals make this so complicated, since they think of it as really quite simple.

To be honest on page 81, you should have quoted the new Catechism of the Catholic Church, and not given your own paraphrased and private interpretation of what their book says. (6). In paragraph 1367 the Catechism states (and I happen to have a copy), “*The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one single sacrifice: ‘The victim is one and the same: the same now offers through the ministry of priests, who then offered himself on the cross; only the manner of offering is different.’ ‘In this divine sacrifice which is celebrated in the Mass, the same Christ who offered himself once in a bloody manner on the altar of the Cross is contained and is offered in an unbloody manner.’” So why do us Protestants seem to always say that Catholic’s have *another* sacrifice, or a re-sacrificing of Christ over and over again. They see it is a participation in the one sacrifice. History seems to be on their side, and this is something else I want to talk to you about. But first, one of the early Christians, Justin Martyr wrote,*

“Hence God speaks by the mouth of Malachi, one of the twelve prophets, as I said before, about the sacrifices at that time presented by you [Jews]: >I have no pleasure in you,’ says the Lord, >and I will not accept your sacrifices at your hands; for from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same My Name has been glorified among the gentiles, and in every place incense is offered to My

Name, and a pure offering: for My Name is great among the gentiles says the Lord, but you profane it.' He then speaks to those Gentiles, namely us, who in every place offer sacrifices to Him, that is, the bread of the Eucharist and also the cup of the Eucharist, affirming both that we glorify His Name and you profane it." (7).

When I read Paul's letter to the Corinthians I seem to see the same kind of language:

"I speak as to sensible men; judge for yourselves what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation (8) in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. Consider the people of Israel; are not those who eat the sacrifices partners in the altar? . . . I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be partners with demons. You cannot drink of the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons." (9)

Notice the sacrificial language being used. The term "*table of the Lord*" is a technical term and in the Old Testament always refers to a table of sacrifice. Why would Paul use such blatantly sacrificial terminology if he is trying to deny any association with the Eucharist and sacrifice? These are questions that Catholics are going to ask when they read your criticisms. I wish you had handled this better or they will never get to your chapter *A Personal Word To Catholics*.

Here is what really bothers me and you don't appear to address it. Why is the Protestant position on the Lord's Supper at such odds with the universal teaching of the first Christians who called the Lord's Supper "Eucharist"? I always thought the first four centuries of Christendom were essentially Evangelical, and then pagan elements infiltrated, and the Catholic Church was the resulting mutation. After reading the writings of the Fathers (the Didache, first century; Ignatius of Antioch, 106 AD; Clement of Rome, 96 AD; Justin Martyr, second century; Barnabas, first century, etc.) I could *not* find my favorite Evangelical doctrines represented, if fact, I found distinctly Catholic doctrines. (10) This is a real problem that needs to be addressed and you didn't seem to address it. It was smart of you to keep your readers from referring to the history of the first centuries. It certainly disturbed me when I began to read our Christian history. Why would those who received the Gospels from the apostles have gone off the track so quickly? It didn't make any sense. Why did the Lord wait fifteen hundred years, until Luther came along, to get the train back on the tracks? I guess a thousand years is like one day to Him.

Eternal Security

Being eternally secure is one of the great promises and truths found in the Bible, and it gives us all a great sense of assurance. However, it may be good to explain a bit to your Catholic readers what John is really trying to say in 1 John 5:13 which you cite on page 236. I think that even Catholics would agree that v. 13 is a summary verse, concluding the whole epistle (F.F. Bruce says it is). The intent of John's letter was primarily, it seems, to defend the true Faith against the heresies of the Gnostics (especially one Cerinthus) who said one needed special

knowledge beyond Jesus Christ to have eternal life. John is refuting the Gnostics and comforting the Christians that they *did* have the true knowledge, which John had seen, heard and handled (1 John 1:1-3), and the true knowledge through Jesus Christ, was the true and only way to eternal life. His argument was between the Christian teaching and the Gnostic heresy, between the physical incarnation of God and the illusory phantom god of the Gnostics. Eternal life was in the Son and not in esoteric teachings of Gnostics, and of this the believers could be assured.

Maybe you can help me again. Since verse 13 is probably the summary of John's letter, what about the conditional word "if," which is used 20 times in the preceding text? Do you think John could be saying, "*If you understand and abide by the conditions of this letter, if you love one another, if you avoid sin, if you believe in the Son, etc. etc., you may know that you have eternal life?*" I have never seen this verse tied in with its context before, nor have I seen it discussed in light of the twenty *if*'s.

John Stott says in his commentary The Epistles of John, "*They (the recipients of John's letter) had been unsettled by the false teachers and become unsure of their spiritual state. Throughout the epistle John has been giving them criteria (doctrinal, moral, social) by which to test themselves and others. His purpose was to establish their assurance.*" But at the same time, could they securely "rest" in their absolute assurance of salvation *if* they were not living up to the "criteria" John given them?

Sometimes Paul gets a little *iffy* too. For example in Colossians 1:22, 23 he writes, "*But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation - if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel.*" Is he saying our final salvation is conditional? What are we supposed to say when the Bible Catholic asks us Bible Christians these kinds of questions? Some of these new Catholics are getting pretty sharp these days.

Conclusion

You see, I was raised in an Evangelical Protestant home. My favorite authors have always been Sproul, Ironside, Packer, Kennedy, Bruce, Henry, Geisler, Luther (I have his complete works), Calvin, etc. I have always spurned Catholic and their books. But what bothers me as I read the Scriptures, the first century writings, and the history my Protestant heritage is that the words of John Newman start to make sense. Newman said, "*To be deep in history is to cease being a Protestant.*" Maybe we Evangelicals should give the Catholic Church a fair hearing, by reading what Catholic authors teach about the Catholic Church, and not just what Protestants write about Catholics. (11) G.K. Chesterton wrote,

"He has come too near to the truth, and has forgotten that truth is a magnet, with the powers of attraction and repulsion. It is impossible to be just to the Catholic Church. The moment men cease to pull against it they feel a tug towards it. The moment they cease to shout it down they begin to listen to it with pleasure. The moment they try to be fair to it they begin to be fond of it. But when that affection has passed a certain point it begins to take on the tragic and menacing grandeur of a great love affair. When one has entered the Church, he finds that the Church is much larger inside than it is outside."(12)

If Chesterton is correct, we would all be wise to stay far away. But I have more than thirty other ex-Evangelical friends, *in my immediate area alone*, that have joined the Catholic Church in the last few years. It seems to be a wide ranging exodus back to the Catholic Church - taking place across the country. I even read about it in *Christianity Today* several months ago. One of my best friends, a graduate of Trinity Evangelical Seminary in Deerfield Illinois (with a degree in New Testament), just joined the Catholic Church along with several Baptist friends. It seems that the anti-Catholic theology is losing its grip with those willing to challenge the narrow confines of recent Fundamentalist tradition. What is the result in their lives? This worries me too. They really display the love of Christ. They seem to take sin much more seriously, and they say holiness is a wonderful adventure, not just an optional appurtenance.

Final Thoughts

While I was flipping through your book I realized it was just another in a series of books written by authors who don't give the Catholic Church the credit due to it, and in the long run you are going to discredit your cause. (13)

About an hour after sitting down with *Protestants & Catholics*, I set your book on the shelf along with Boettner, Hunt, Hislop, Swaggart, McCarthy, Wilson, White, and all the others. I'm still waiting for an honest book that deals with the issues fairly, and doesn't treat the intelligent Catholic as a buffoon. I am still waiting for a book that once and for all will really address the issues squarely and not just rely on Fundamentalist jargon.

I am also waiting to see the Love of Christ in some of these books. I am dismayed to see that Catholics are the ones who display gentleness and love, willing to practice the Love of Christ toward their Protestant brethren, but we Evangelicals always seem so suspicious, cold and calculating - ready to cut the first dissenter off at the kneecaps. Catholics practice observable humility - I don't see a slew of Catholic books condemning Evangelicals to the rubbish heap of heresy and false teaching. They seem to turn the other cheek and love their Protestant brethren. I, on the other hand, don't mind challenging this incongruity. How else can we get anywhere if *we* don't practice love and unity? We should get these thousands of denominations together and show the Catholics that they aren't the only ones who can maintain a visible unity!

I hope you find these suggestions helpful, and I sure hope you can revise your book, to fix some of these weaknesses, before too many volumes get sold. I could only comment on a few points, though I saw many others I would like to discussed with you, if I had the time. If I can be of further assistance, please feel free to write.

In Christ,

Steve Ray

CC: John Weldon, R.C. Sproul, John MacArthur, Jr., D. James Kennedy

Editor's Note: I never received a response from any of those who received a copy. Interesting.

Endnotes:

1. Your footnote reads: *As cited in the Los Angeles Times, March 8, 1983, part 1, p. 10.* Why did you cite an article no one can research and verify without extended efforts? Has the Pope written so little that you have to quote from a twelve-year old newspaper article? What if one wants to know the context?

2. Gen. 22:2 *“And He said, “Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah; and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you.”*

Chron. 3:1 *“Then Solomon began to build the house of the Lord in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah.”*

Luke 9:30, 31 *“And behold, two men were talking with Him; and they were Moses and Elijah, who, appearing in glory, were speaking of His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.”* We know that Jesus was crucified in Jerusalem. Isn't it wonderful that on the very mountain, Mount Moriah (Gn. 22:2), that Abraham “sacrificed” his only son, and where God provided a ram for the sacrifice, on that very mountain about two thousand years later stood the city of Jerusalem (2 Chron. 3:1), and on that very mountain the real lamb of God, Jesus, the only son of the Father, was sacrificed as a substitute for our sins. How remarkable God is and how remarkable His word!

3. Luther said in his Commentary on the Psalms, *“Scriptura sui ipsius interpres”* or in English, *“The Bible is its own interpreter.”* It doesn't take a rocket scientist to see where that idea has gotten us. Even Luther quickly saw the devastating affect. He wrote, *“There are almost as many sects and beliefs as there are heads; this one will not admit Baptism; that one rejects the Sacrament of the altar; another places another world between the present one and the day of judgment; some teach that Jesus Christ is not God. There is not an individual, however clownish he may be, who does not claim to be inspired by the Holy Ghost, and who does not put forth as prophecies his ravings and dreams.”* (Cited in Bible: Quizzes to a Street Preacher, Leslie Rumble, Rockford, IL: TAN Books, 1976, page 22).

Luther also wrote, *“If the world lasts for a long time, it will again be necessary, on account of the many interpretations which are now given to the Scriptures, to receive the decrees of the councils, and take refuge in them, in order to preserve the unity of the faith.”* (Epis. ad Zwingli). These are amazing statements. I wish all my Evangelical books on Luther were more honest about some of the things he said. Why is it that Evangelicals are so selective in what they pass on to the next generation?

4. We Protestants can't come close to agreements on things like baptismal regeneration, the Lord's Supper, etc. Many believe it, many deny it. Luther and Calvin believed it, especially for infants. Others, like to claim the Reformers as their own, yet are very selective which doctrines of the Reformation they embrace. Do you baptize infants? How can glibly refer to Protestants and Reformers as though they all held a tightly-sewn theology, especially when they were fighting among themselves, even to the point of slaughter? Even those who claim the appellation “Evangelical” are finding fewer and fewer common bonds.

5. How do we Protestants explain an altar, the table of sacrifice, in *heaven* before the throne of God (Is. 6:1; Rev. 6:9; 8:3, 5; 9:13; 11:1; 14:18; 16:7). Didn't altars become extinct with the new covenant or dispensation?

6. If you treat their own documents cavalierly, the Catholic will lose trust in the way you read and interpret the Bible. Credibility is hard to regain with a reader, once you've lost it.

7. **Justin the Martyr** in his *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew* c.135 A.D. [Chapter 41]. Justin explains the Eucharist as a sacrifice, and that had been prophesied about hundreds of years earlier by Malachi [1: 10]. This was the universal teaching of the primitive Church.

“Justin speaks of ‘all the sacrifices in this name which Jesus appointed to be performed, viz. in the Eucharist of the bread and the cup, and which are celebrated in every place by Christians’. Not only here but elsewhere too, he identifies ‘the bread of the Eucharist, and the cup likewise of the Eucharist,’ with the sacrifice foretold by Malachi.

“It was natural for early Christians to think of the Eucharist as a sacrifice. The fulfilment of prophecy demanded a solemn Christian offering, and the rite itself was wrapped in the sacrificial atmosphere with which our Lord invested the Last Supper. The words of institution, ‘Do this,’ must have been charged with sacrificial overtones for second century ears; Justin at any rate understood them to me ‘Offer this.’ If we inquire what the sacrifice was supposed to consist in, the Didache for its part provides no clear answer. Justin however, makes it plain that the bread and wine themselves were the ‘pure offering’ foretold by Malachi. Even if he holds, that ‘prayers and thanksgivings’ are the only God-pleasing sacrifices, we must remember that he uses, the term ‘thanksgiving’ as technically equivalent to ‘the eucharistized bread and wine.’ The bread and wine, moreover, are offered ‘for a memorial of the passion,’ a phrase which in view of his identification of them with the Lord’s body and blood, implies much more than an act of purely spiritual recollection. Altogether it would seem that, while his language is not fully explicit, Justin is feeling his way to the conception of the Eucharist as the offering of the Savior’s passion.” Early Christian Doctrines by renowned Protestant scholar J.N.D. Kelly (San Francisco: Harper & Row; 1978).

8. What does the word *participation* mean? Is this also symbolic language? No, it means a real participation. St. Augustine places these words on Jesus’ lips to describe what happens at the Eucharist: *“You will not change me into you as happens with bodily food; rather, you will be changed into me.”* (*Confessions*, VII, 10, 16) Even Kittel’s says, *“koinwnia denotes participation, fellowship, esp. with a close bond. It expresses a two-sided relationship. It means participation, impartation, fellowship.”* (TDNT, III, 798).

St. Chrysostom says, *What in fact is the bread? The body of Christ. What do they become who receive communion? The body of Christ.*” (Chrysostom, *Hom. on 1 Cor. 24, ad loc.*). He seems to think this is not just participating in a symbolic gesture, but that Paul says, we are actually participating in the body and blood of Christ. How can that be if it is just a symbol. Are the first Christians the Bible literalists or are we?

9. *The sacramental status of the bread and wine is not only presupposed but is made the basis of the argument. . . . The spiritual food and drink now reappear more closely defined as the body and blood of Christ: although the ultimate basis of this definition will be given later (1 Cor. 11:23-26), Paul can assume it as common ground shared with his audience, strong enough to*

support the further argument. . . . What the New Testament writings presuppose . . . is of greater importance than what they actually describe.” (The Study of Liturgy ed. by Jones, Wainwright, Yarnold, and Bradshaw; NY: Oxford University Press; 1978, 1992).

It seems St. Paul is comparing three sacrifices offered on altars (tables): that of the Jews (v. 18), that of the pagans (vs. 19-21; offered to idols), and that of the Christians, the Eucharist. Paul confirms the sacrificial nature of the Christian Eucharist. The “*table of the Lord*” is a common technical term in the Old Testament referring to the altar of sacrifice (Lev. 24:6, 7; Ez. 41:22; 44:15; Mal. 1:7, 12). The “*table of the Lord*” in the Church, referred to by Paul, and drawing from Old Testament terminology and practice, is now the altar for the new sacrifice referred to by Malachi (Mal. 1:11) according to the first and second century Christians. Notice the “*table of the Lord*” is mentioned twice in the first chapter of Malachi, before and after the Yahweh’s promise of a future, world-wide sacrifice offered by the gentiles. The “*table of the Lord*,” or sacrificial altar, will be the place of this offering which corresponds to the Eucharist offered on the “*table of the Lord*” in 1 Cor. 10:21.

The parallels are striking: Malachi twice frames the “*pure sacrifice*” of the gentiles, with the sacrificial “*table of the Lord*.” Paul then uses this same terminology to explain the new sacrifice offered on the “*table of the Lord*” in the Church. The sacrifice of the Eucharist on the “*table of the Lord*,” is contrasted with the other well-known sacrifices offered on *tables* or altars. Paul, the brightest student of the brightest Jewish teacher, Gamaliel, is not using this Old Testament terminology lightly. He knows his readers understand the power of his sacrificial terminology in regards to the Eucharist. It seems that Paul, the brilliant teacher of the Torah, understood the Eucharist in sacrificial terms, offered on the “*table of the Lord*” as a fulfillment of Malachi 1:11. “*The parallelism that Paul draws between Jewish and pagan participation in their sacrifices through eating the meat of the victims and Christian fellowship with Christ through the Eucharist shows that he considers the eating of the Eucharist a sacrificial repast and implies that the Eucharist itself is a sacrifice.*” (Jerome Biblical Commentary Edited by Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1968.)

10. For example, the first century Christian, Ignatius of Antioch, who history tells us knew the apostles, writes, “*Observe those who hold erroneous opinions concerning the grace of Jesus Christ which has come to us, and see how they run counter to the mind of God! They concern themselves with neither works of charity, nor widows, nor orphans, nor the distressed, nor those in prison or out of it, nor the hungry or thirsty. **From Eucharist and prayer they hold aloof, because they do not confess that the Eucharist is the Flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins, and which the Father in His loving-kindness raised from the dead. And so, those who question the gift of God perish in their contentiousness. It would be better for them to have love, so as to share in the resurrection.***” (Epistle to the Smyrnaeans 6, 7)

11. I am afraid that when I learn everything about the Catholic Church from Protestant sources, it is parallel to a person learning everything they know about Israel from Palestinian sources.

12. G.K. Chesterton Collected Works Vol.3: *The Catholic Church and Conversion* written in 1927 by G. K. Chesterton (San Francisco: Ignatius Press; 1990).

13. Martin Luther, the patriarch of the Protestant Reformation also wrote, “*We are obliged to yield many things to the Catholics—(for example) that they possess the word of God which we received from them; otherwise we should have known nothing at all about it.*” [Comment in Johan 16].