

IS THE CHURCH OF ROME A CHURCH OF CHRIST?

“The purest churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error; and some have so degenerated as to become no churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan.”—Confession of Faith, Ch. xxv. 5.

With mistaken charity, or from a desire to please men rather than God, it has become customary for many members of our Reformed churches to speak of the Church of Rome as of a Church of Christ. In consequence of this, Missions to Roman Catholics are discountenanced as both useless and impertinent. Call the Church of Rome a Christian Church if you will, but a Church of Christ is not the same thing. A commercial firm often keeps its original designation long after its founders have passed away, although the new managers may do business on totally different principles from those of their predecessors. This is the position of the Church of Rome. It was entitled to the name of Christian once, this name *then* meant a Church of Christ, to-day it may mean something widely different. We claim here that when a Church has given up the doctrine of Christ, the Spirit of Christ, and the morality of Christ, it is no longer a Church of Christ.

Roman Catholics tell us that their Church could not lose the faith, because Christ told Peter: “I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not,” Luke xxii: 32; and also “Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it,” Matt. xvi: 18. Peter and Rome do not, however, appear to be interchangeable terms, for the faith of Rome has failed, and the gates of hell have prevailed. The theory of an infallible church is beautiful, but facts disprove it, as we will show further on.

- We might begin by quoting the well-known prophecies in 1 Tim. iv: 1-3, and 2 Thess. i: 1-2, and show without much difficulty, how in both, the characteristics of the great apostasy are given, applying to the Roman system more than to any other. We might repeat what is said in Rev., 17th and 18th Ch., of the woman sitting on seven hills “full of names of blasphemy, and drunken with the blood of the saints;” but as in none of these places the inspired writers have expressly named Rome, we would be told that Paul’s prophecy to Timothy referred to some Gnostic sects, that the one in Thessalonians applies to an Antichrist, yet to come, and that John meant Pagan and not Christian Rome, by “the great Babylon.” So we will say nothing more here of these remarkable passages of Scripture, confining ourselves to brief comparisons of the doctrines of the Gospel, to the doctrines of the Church of Rome.

“If ye abide *in my word*, then are ye truly my disciples,” these are the words of the Master. Let the Church which has departed from the Word of