

Celibacy of the Clergy

An inspired apostle has declared that a bishop shall be the husband of one wife, but the church of Rome puts upon her priesthood a perpetual celibacy. It is necessary to the exercise of the pastoral office that a man should know by experience something of domestic life, and the man who lives in the ministry without a companion to cheer him has lost an essential element of usefulness. Marriage is an institution of Heaven, and every man has in his own soul, God-given instincts which lead him to a desire of domestic enjoyments. A priest, who, against nature, has bound himself to celibacy, has dehumanized himself, stepped out of the pale of natural law, and placed a barrier between himself and society.

The effects of celibacy upon a man's mind are disastrous in the extreme; the intellect and soul freeze under the withering influence of resistance to the laws of life. The Romish priesthood never could have ordered such horrid barbarities as have disgraced their very name, if by the domestic laws they had been linked to the great heart of humanity. But they changed under the influence of a corrupting celibacy, from men to demons, and then could coolly roast women and children, stone, rack, torture and murder men, without one compunction of conscience, or one thought of mercy.

But the influence of celibacy upon the morals is more destructive. The history of the church of Rome, for centuries past, proves that celibacy is a most onerous cause of profligacy in the priesthood. Romanists have themselves bewailed celibacy as a cause of immorality and sin. "St. Bernard, in the twelfth century, admitted and lamented the improprieties of the priesthood, 'who committed in secret such acts of turpitude as would be shameful to express.'" Cimangis declared the "adultery and impurity of the clergy as beyond description. They frequent stews and taverns, and spend their whole time in eating, drinking, rioting, gaming and dancing. Surfeited and drunk, these sacerdotal sensualists fought, shouted, rioted and blasphemed, and passed directly from the embrace of the harlot to the altar of God."

Agrippa, speaking of the fruits of celibacy, says: "One bishop, on one occasion, boasted of having in his diocese 13,000 priests, who paid their superior every year a guinea for leave to keep a concubine." Alvares, a Spanish author, asserts that "the sons of the Spanish clergy were as numerous as those of the laity." "They will pass," says he, "without confession, from the concubines to God's altar." Albert, duke of Bavaria, deplored the infamy of the German priesthood in glowing colors. "The recital," says he, "of clerical criminality would wound the ear of chastity. Debauchery has covered the ecclesiastics with infamy." An American writer of note, speaking of a past century, says: "Switzerland was the scene of similar profligacy. It rose to such a height prior to the Reformation, that the Swiss laity compelled every priest to take a concubine of his own, in order to preserve the safety of others." Clemingis also narrates, that the laity would tolerate the clergy only on condition of their keeping concubines. The French clergy were by no means behind those of other countries in this disgraceful career. According to the account of Measerey, an eminent historian, all the French ecclesiastics were in a sad state of irregularity. The majority had concubines, while some of the deacons had four or five female companions. The Italian and Roman clergy surpassed all others in infamy."

This is a general, yea, the universal statement reaching us from all lands and all climes. Clerical celibacy, says the late Regent of Brazil (himself a bishop), is the chief cause of public immorality in Brazil.

Facts might be adduced to almost any extent, showing the influence of celibacy upon the clergy of the Romish Church, and its tendency to immorality and crime. Facts, hideous, startling and overwhelming might be produced, but many of them would be too disgusting for the public eye. These facts have been recorded by the historian; they cannot be blotted out; they belong to all lands, and the immorality of the papal priesthood, so notorious in Europe, is chargeable not to the priests themselves, but to the system which enjoins on them to perpetuate celibacy.--Herald of the Kingdom Vol. 5 Pg. 168