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The celibacy of the priesthood

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SENIOR THESIS

THE CELIBACY OF THE PRIESTHOOD.

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THE CELIBACY OF THE PRIESTHOOD

(An historical study, culminating in the Council of
Trent.)

The question of the celibacy of the priesthood, has, throughout the history of the church, been a most important issue. But its influence has not been confined to the church alone; society has felt the terrible curse of its enforcement, and its dire results have been only too conspicuous. It is still one of the significant characteristics of the Roman Catholic Church, and the Greek Church enforces it in part. Hence we are to consider a question of some import, a question both ancient and modern.

It is of course first essential that we define the term "celibacy", and we shall do this by a consultation of both Catholic and Protestant views, though they appear quite similar in fundamentals.

The Catholic view may be stated as follows, "Celibacy is the renunciation of marriage implicitly or explicitly made, for the more perfect observance of chastity, by all those who receive the Sacrament of Orders in any of the higher grades."

(Cath. Ency.). Though the utilitarian aspect is made very prominent in celibacy, it is not limited to this aspect but strikes deeper. The Church is regarded as the Virgin Bride, again as the Virgin Mother, and hence it is very fitting that a virgin priesthood serve it. There is the conviction prevalent that virginity is of higher sanctity than marriage; that the priest who lives in this virginity can better serve his parish, and will never lack sufficient funds for support as is often the case among Protestant pastors.

The Protestant definition of "celibacy" is fundamentally the same; it is as follows, "Celibacy in the Roman Catholic Church, means the permanently unmarried state to which men and women bind themselves either by vow or by the reception of major orders, which implies personal purity in thought and deed."

We shall now turn to the earliest beginnings of the institution of celibacy, and endeavor to trace its course in history.

There is noticeable a marked contrast between the Materialism of the Mosaic Dispensation and the Spiritualism of the law of Christ. The first deals with worldly punishments and rewards, having no eye for the future; the second draws attention to the

inward treasures of this life, and directs the fears and aspirations toward the future life.

As we contemplate the immediate followers of Christ, we observe that they imitated him in the moderate and cheerful use of the natural enjoyments given to man by a beneficent Creator, and yet it is not strange that strong self-denying zeal should soon lead such ardent disciples to mark out an even narrower and straighter pathway. They were actuated by the spiritualism of the law of Christ, and their Christian philosophy was, that this life was but preparatory for the life to come. Hence they became convinced that the most certain method of securing the eternal joys of heaven, was to turn from the transitory joys of earth. From this conviction there soon arose the belief that the only way in which a soul might be worthy to participate in the benefits of Christ's death was through conquering and mortifying the flesh. Those who were marked out as leaders by their peculiar strength of will, resolute character and singleness of purpose, ought especially to practice this course of life. The multitude would view their superior virtue and fortitude with admiration, thus vesting them with a holiness which would increase their influence. Thus we

see a principle of asceticism introduced into the early church, foreign to Christ's teachings.

This asceticism naturally placed restrictions on the intercourse of the sexes; religious observances of many nations show traces of such a principle. The Jews though very desirous of numerous offspring, yet placed emphasis upon the restraint of the animal passions. The Brahminical doctrines attached great importance to the possession of male descendants, but when they were assured, an ascetic life was enjoined; the man was to leave his home. The sacerdotal class of Buddhists practice the strictest celibacy, under penalty of expulsion. Egyptian priests may have but one wife, while the people are permitted unlimited polygamy.

Such a spirit is not found in Christ's teachings nor in those of his disciples. His exposition of plain, practical precepts is clear to the fair-minded and reasonable of mankind. Acute intellects have sought to pervert his teachings in order to support their own foregone conclusions.

The question of the marriage of the Apostles has been given too great an importance in this controversy of ecclesiastical discipline, but we

must nevertheless pause here to consider it. The New Testament contains no prohibition of marriage. In fact, some of the Apostles were married as is seen by a consultation of certain passages of scripture, e.g. Matthew 8:14; I Cor. 9:5. Peter married; the Lord's brothers had wives; and Philip the deacon had four daughters. If marriage did not detract from the dignity and authority of an apostle, surely it is not inconsistent with the dignity and purity of any minister of Christ. Paul recommended marriage to the heads of churches, I Tim. 3:2, though he considers it better not to marry under certain circumstances, I Cor. 7:38. In I Tim. 4:1-3, Paul classes the prohibition of marriage, including its consequences, as among the doctrines of demons or evil spirits which control the heathen religions and as signs of the apostasy of latter days. "The Bible represents marriage as the first institution of God, dating from the state of man's innocency." (Schaff "Hist. of the Christian Church--Vol. 2, pp 404-414).

As the opponents of sacerdotal celibacy quote scripture in support of their position, so the advocates of the institution turn to the Bible for proof that celibacy is scriptural. I Timothy 3:2-12

speaks of the foolish who "take captive silly women laden with sins." We find little in support of celibacy here, however. They draw attention to Titus I:6 which mentions the having of but one wife, but here seems to be a passage which recognizes marriage as proper. The strongest passage in support of celibacy is no doubt I Cor. 7:7-8, where Paul expresses the wish that all men were as himself, unmarried. Even this wish however is qualified, for Paul adds in verse 9, "But if they have not continency, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn."

Thus there is much proof which seems to indicate that the Apostles and their immediate disciples did not consider marriage as incompatible with the functions of the Christian ministry. Had this not been true, a rigid rule would no doubt have been introduced, but such is not the case. On the contrary the "Synod of Jerusalem gave positive assurance to the doubting and weaker brethren that their zeal was not to be taxed by observances difficult of obedience."

(Lea "History of Sacerdotal Celibacy." p 26.)

The scanty church records of the first three centuries have no comment on celibacy as a compulsory rule for ministers. On the other hand there

are evidences to the contrary. Polycarp writes an epistle to the Phillipians in which he expresses grief at the misfortune of a priest, named Valeus, and his wife. Tertullian, a married priest, shows that the Latin church placed no restrictions on the marital intercourse of ecclesiastics; he indicates no difference between the laity and priesthood in this respect. This testimony of Tertullian is more convincing, because he was a Montanist, and the asceticism of this group exceeded that admitted to be orthodox by the church of his time.

Justin Martyr in the "Apologies" written in 150; Athenagoras in 180; and Minucius Felix in 200, exhibit the same lack of evidence of sacerdotal celibacy. They were the Fathers who defended the Christians from popular accusations. If the spiritual guides of the Christians had been pledged to celibacy, this point would most assuredly have been used in refutation of the charge of indiscriminate licentiousness.

We next turn to the two oldest collections of ecclesiastical regulations, viz.: the "Canones Apostolorum" and the "Constitutiones Apostolorum".

These writings are bodies of ecclesiastical law not included in the Scripture, but so venerable that their origin was already (150-200) lost sight of though they were received as authoritative expositions of primitive discipline. The Apostolic Constitutions give full details as to the qualifications of all grades of the clergy, with directions concerning their duties; the church ritual is also included. There is no indication here that celibacy was a necessity of the clerical character. It was stipulated however, that clerics were to have but one wife. The bishop, priest, or deacon if unmarried at ordination should remain so, but if married, there must be no separation; members of the lower grades could marry after ordination. The rules of the Greek church are the same as those of the third century.

The Apostolic Canons have a system of discipline similar to that of the Constitutions. They add, that a bishop or priest who leaves his wife under the plea of religion is to be excommunicated. These rules were generally admitted throughout the medieval period by the highest church authorities. The practice of the Greek Church was at first universal, and celibacy was an innovation to the early rules of the Church.

It is a modern error to believe that celibacy was enjoined on the clerics of the early church. Nevertheless, from these two collections of regulations above mentioned, it is clear that even by the third century there were certain restrictions placed upon those who sought to enter holy orders.

The Church had so far, adopted no dogma which recognized the peculiar sanctity of celibacy, but nevertheless, during this period the spirit of asceticism was very rife. Certain Zealots declared it to be incompatible with salvation, to follow the precepts of the Creator; such, sought to attract followers to themselves by a reputation gained from self-denying austerities. Marcion, founder of the Marcionites was such a one. On the other hand were those who gave themselves up to the grossest animalism e.g. Prodicus who, it seems, originated the mystic libertinism of the Gnostics. The Church was not yet ready for the former class, and would not sanction the latter. However, both trends had an influence on the practice if not the dogmas of the Church.

Perhaps the first manifestation of this influence is seen in the opinions held regarding

second marriages. Though it was an article of belief of the heretical Montanists, that second marriages were adulterous, nevertheless it had crept into the priesthood discipline and marked the first line of separation between clergy and laity. It came to be impossible for a "digamus" (husband of a second wife) to be admitted to holy orders.

With this principle firmly established, a distinction was made between the clergy and laity in respect to the marriage tie, which gave to the clergy an affectation of sanctity which could be indefinitely extended. Hence it is not difficult to see how they were soon subjected to the old Levitical rule which permitted the priesthood to marry none but virgins. This was the condition of ecclesiastical discipline at the close of the third century, according to the Apostolic Constitutions and Canons.

Public opinion moved more rapidly than the Canons, and ascetic sects multiplied. The sexes subjected their constancy to severest trials; congenial souls sought a Platonic union in which they endeavored to maintain a purity vowed before God. Often, however, confusion resulted when nature asserted itself. The desire for a reputation of virginity resulted in much

secret immorality and infanticide.

During this agitation in the Christian world, a new dogma arose in the East, called "Manicheism". It was dualistic and presented even more advanced ascetic ideas. The adherents of this dogma came to be dreaded by the Christians, though some of their doctrines were unconsciously woven into the Apostolic Constitutions.

Another advance in the controversy was made in the year 305, when the Spanish Council of Elvira very decidedly proclaimed that all engaged in the ministry of the altar "should practice entire abstinence from their wives under pain of forfeiting their positions." (Lea p47). This was merely the legislation of a local synod, hence its jurisdiction was comparatively limited.

CENTRALIZATION AND LEGISLATION. (After third century).

Up to this time the church had been growing "without and recognized head or acknowledged legislative power." (Lea. p 50). But the time had come when centralization was possible. In 325 the First General Council convened at Nicaea. Action was taken

regarding the prominent question of celibacy. Some maintained that the Council enjoined celibacy upon all who were admitted to holy orders. The phraseology of its decree however scarcely seems to warrant such a conclusion; it was as follows: "The Great Synod has strictly forbidden to bishop, priest, and deacon, and to every ecclesiastic, to have a 'subintroductam mulierem' unless perhaps a mother, a sister, an aunt, or such person only as may be above suspicion." (Lea pp. 51). A 'subintroducta mulier' was any female companion of the priest; one who lived under his roof. Since wives are not here mentioned, those believing celibacy to be of Apostolic origin assumed that an absolute separation between husband and wife was meant. We do not believe that an innovation of such importance would be made a part of the discipline of the universal church without being specifically designated and commanded in clear terms. The real aim of the council was to legislate against the improper companions of the clergy. At any rate, for some time after the Council of Nicaea, married priests were not interfered with.

Progress in asceticism to date had been the result of moral influences alone. The class of ascetics, those who regarded the various forms of absti-

nence and mortification as the only path to salvation, had become quite a large body in the Church however, though not yet strong enough to impose its rules on others. The contest was on, and waged for about sixty years after the Nicene Council. The first triumph of the ascetic party was in the establishment of recognized restrictions on those who had of their own will taken the vows of celibacy. These latter aspired to no rank in the Church, but simply dedicated their lives to God and vowed lives of abstinence.

Soon after his conversion, the benevolence of Constantine coupled with the increasing wealth of the Church, drew large numbers to the monastic profession and proselytes of a most questionable character were joined to the ranks of the Church where they were free from all care.

Under such conditions the need of established rules soon became apparent. The Council of Carthage in 348 made rules regarding those who had chosen chastity as their lot, but quickly was obliged to invoke the assistance of temporal powers. Jovian in 364 established a law which forbade any attempt to marry a sacred virgin, under penalty of actual or civil.

death, The extreme severity of this law indicates the state of morals.

These efforts however were confined to those who had bound themselves with solemn vows. Such were the monks who had dedicated themselves to God and lived lives of abstinence apart from the world. These monks are to be distinguished from the priests who constituted the secular clergy; the priests mingled with the world and aspired to advancement in the Church. The secular clergy were still permitted freedom to follow the dictates of conscience. To realize the strength and desirability of this freedom, we have but to note how the entire Church stood out against a certain bishop, Eustathius (352 ff) and his followers who were strong in their condemnation of marriage and married priests. Every attempt to constitute the necessity of ascetic abstinence an article of either faith or discipline was promptly condemned by the Church. A little more than twenty years after this forceful condemnation of interference with married priests we come upon the first absolute command addressed to the higher clergy to preserve inviolate celibacy. This marks an abrupt change for which there must be good reasons.

The temporal power of the clergy had been greatly increased and their position improved. Hence ambitious ones flocked to this calling and an undesirable clergy was speedily established. The increased laxity in morals among the clergy, aided the advocates of asceticism in triumphing over the conservatives. Moreover, church property was largely increased, and if ecclesiastics were married there would be the risk of improper distribution of property, due to the parental desire to provide for children. The remedy proposed was "celibacy".

In 385 Pope Siricius sent an epistle to an archbishop in Spain, in which the celibacy of all grades of clergy was demanded. Those having wives were to live separate from them; whoever willfully disobeyed was to be expelled from office. This was the first canon prescribing the enforcement of sacerdotal celibacy, which is exhibited by the church records. Later words of Siricius show the difficulty experienced in enforcing the rule.

Celibacy, at first, had been a joyful self-sacrifice, but now it was prescribed by a law binding on all alike. This law encountered much opposition on all sides, and some making bold to denounce celibacy

openly, gathered those about them who were of a like mind. Among these leaders were Jovian, and Vigilantius a shepherd lad who later became a priest. These two were active between the years 390 and 412. Jovian boldly made his declaration against the efficacy of celibacy, in the very city of Rome. The power of Pope Innocent aided by the barbarian invasions, was sufficient to exterminate these groups. The death of Vigilantius and Jovian marked the end of the last organized and acknowledged attempt to stay the progress of celibacy in the Roman Church, until centuries later when the regulation was so firmly established as to be above dispute. The Western Church was at length committed to the strict observance of ecclesiastical celibacy.

Had this new rule aided any in the purification of the Church? The answer must be emphatically negative, for Italy, Spain, and Africa were in a wretched state of morality; engrossed in great licentiousness. The strength of the people was consumed in domestic excesses, the theatre, the circus etc. The clergy themselves demonstrated a great lack of virtue. The invasions of the barbarians were looked upon by the pious as a visitation of divine

wrath. And so we observe that the corruption in the church seemed to have increased under the new rule; secret and unlawful means of indulging the passions were found, since lawful marriage was prohibited by the law of celibacy.

Strenuous attempts were made to establish celibacy as strongly in the Eastern Church as it was in the Western. But marriage was evidently more desirable to the clergy of the East than celibacy. The influence of St. John Chrysostom's name was added to the demand for celibacy; he maintained that celibacy was as superior to marriage as heaven is to the earth, or angels to men. All these efforts were short-lived. The Eastern Church instead of following the dictates of the Western Church, followed the traditions of earlier times as recorded in the Apostolic Constitutions and Canons, where there was advice rather than compulsory legislation in regard to celibacy. In the Council of Constantinople (680), the Eastern Church formally and solemnly declared a separate and independent discipline on the point of celibacy, and refused to allow the sacerdotalism of Rome to dominate it. The Greek Church has preserved to the present its

earliest traditions. "Marriage in orders is not permitted, nor are digami admissible, but the lower grades of the clergy are free to marry, nor are they separated from their wives when promoted to the sacred functions of the diaconate or priesthood. The Bishops are selected from the regular clergy or monks, and, being bound by the law of chastity, are of course unmarried and unable to marry." (Lea pp.97).

Closely following the ill success which attended the attempt of the Western Church to introduce celibacy into the Eastern Church, the problem of the barbarians presented itself to the Latin Church. The barbarians were devastating province after province, and unless conquered, religion and culture would be ruined. Among these invading Franks were princes and rulers who entered the ranks of the clergy, but simply for gain; they were very lax morally. Spain exhibited a very low state of morals as is seen in a law which the king declared in 706, permitting both polygamy and unlimited concubinage to both clergy and laity. The demoralized condition of Italy was nearly as bad.

Such, was the low level of morality in the world when Gregory the Great ascended the pontifical

throne. He made stringent laws but there own severity nullified them. We note little improvement as a result of his efforts, though in the tradition of the Middle Ages his name is connected with the introduction of celibacy.

During the period of the Carlovingian dynasty, the licentiousness of the priests became very flagrant. Severe punishments were prescribed for those who broke the laws of celibacy, but as usual the laws proved ineffective. Some adulterous priests and bishops declared that they had certain special dispensations from Rome, and hence they felt free to continue in their evil courses. The Pope denied that such dispensations had been granted. And thus it continued, the clergy being assailed by both the supreme ecclesiastical and temporal authorities, and yet remaining stubbornly persistent in their mode of life. Those having legal, open relations with women were punished severely and thus a stimulus was furnished to the secret practice of unchastity. The canons were feebly supported and in many cases trampled on. Moreover the laymen were forbidden to inquire into the lives of the priests.

THE TENTH CENTURY.

The tenth century is perhaps the most repulsive in the annals of Christianity. Roman culture had died out and modern civilization had not yet arrived. Society was in a state of transition; ignorance and savage ferocity marked the age, and the Church could not escape the general debasement. Even the heads of the Church were licentious and hence it was futile for the popes to preach purity to humble pastors. Hereditary occupation of benefices, and private appropriation of property became marks of sacerdotalism, and the strongest efforts were directed against these abuses. As the century wore on, sacerdotal marriage became more and more common. The ancient canons were remembered and an effort made to enforce them, but the independence of the age proved too strong for the ecclesiastical authorities. Otho the Great aimed a blow at the hereditary principle by the issuance of an edict which prohibited the sons of deacons, priests, and bishops from occupying the position of notary, judge, or count. As we thus observe the course of affairs, and note the additional legislation, the conclusion is reached that marriage is coming to be recognized as a sacerdotal necessity because of

church property.

The Church in Saxon England evinced a marked aversion to the asceticism which the Romans sought to introduce; while in Ireland not only was celibacy not followed, but marriage was considered permissible. St Boniface paused in the reformation of the French clergy and urged upon the Archbishop of Canterbury the need of repressing the vices of the English clergy. Accordingly a council was called at Clyff and thirty articles on discipline were adopted. the numerous vices of the Anglican church were harshly reproved, but no reference is made to ecclesiastical chastity. Hence we conclude that there was little need of correction in this regard.

About 960 however, steps were taken by St. Dunstan against the lives of the secular clergy who were living immorally in deserted monasteries. But his work was quickly undone as is shown by Ethelred's feeble attempt to introduce restraints on the flagrant immoralities of the time. In 1009, King Ethelred held a council in which the priests were entreated to observe chastity. The council seemed powerless to stay the immorality, and had to content itself with making

promises of reward to the chaste and of punishment to the vicious.

During the reign of Cnut the Dane, some of the grosser immoralities were removed.

When Edward the Confessor came to the throne, the Saxon Church was utterly regardless of the rule of celibacy. The sensual indulgences of the clergy were most displeasing to the keen ascetic nature of Edward, and as an example he lived in perpetual chastity with his wife; his example proved ineffective in influencing the lives of others.

THE ELEVENTH CENTURY.

In the eleventh century we find merely a continuation of the general laxity. The Church seems to have recognized the marriage of the clergy as permissible, and many of the clergy even put away their wives to take more desirable ones. Despite the great license displayed, the class of ascetics had not died out; this class looked with disgust upon the worldly priests who were content to divide their attentions between the sacred calling and the cares of the home.

About this time two reformers arose, viz: St. Peter Damiani and Leo IX (1049). The two worked together to improve the morality. Leo traveled through

northern Europe in an endeavor to restore the neglected discipline of the districts; there were at least external results to his labors. At Rome however, there was little if any success, and the reformatory zeal of Leo and the followers of Damiani was not seconded by the Italian Church.

Pope Nicholas II in 1060, again found it necessary to publish a decree ordering priests to quit their wives or resign their positions. The terms of the decree proclaimed the futility of all previous denunciations. He exhibited some consideration for temporal necessity by permitting discarded wives to live with their husbands under proper supervision.

The clergy now fully recognized that their passive resistance did not kill the ardor of the reformers, and upon the death of Pope Nicholas II in 1061, the opportunity for an open rupture was seized upon. What had previously been termed a transgression, by the reformers, was now given the name of heresy. Damiani, the most ardent of the reformers nearly lost his life to the schismatics, in his eagerness to bring the married clergy to time. He was a true model of asceticism, unwarped by earthly considerations. Hence

it is natural that in his arguments for celibacy, we observe the absence of those practical reasons which became the principal motives for the enforcement of celibacy. His argument was founded mainly upon the claim that Christ's birth of a virgin calls for virginity in service. With his great zeal for the Church, Damiani was sent by Pope Nicholas II to quell the turmoil in Milan, where there was a popular uprising against the licentious clergy. He did succeed in getting the Ambrosian Church represented in Milan to recognize St. Peter as supreme, but this did not control the passions of men, for this, further measures were necessary.

HILDEBRAND**** INFLUENCE IN GERMANY.

Hildebrand became pope in 1073. For over twenty years he had been the real power behind the pontifical throne, and so was well fitted for the office. He, like the other reformers, had been trained in asceticism at Cluny and was therefore well prepared to champion the cause of asceticism; he was determined to permit nothing to retard the working of the rule of celibacy. For a quarter of a century, successive pontiffs had made fruitless efforts to accomplish reform, and in Gregory (Hildebrand) we meet the first

really powerful force. He thought himself especially appointed by God to work for the acceptance of the institution of celibacy. To him was accorded the honor of introducing and enforcing the absolute chastity of the ministers of the altar.

Gregory held his first Synod in 1074, at which was adopted a canon prohibiting sacerdotal marriage, and ordering that no one in the future should be admitted to orders without the vow of celibacy. Furthermore, the people were not to attend the ministrations of those whose lives were a violation of this canon. The new canon was sent to all the bishops of Europe, who were directed to see that it was promulgated through their various dioceses, and to have it obeyed; legates were dispatched to enforce these commands. There was much opposition to Gregory on the part of the priests, who claimed that it was an unnatural regulation and opposed to immemorial custom. They taunted him and asked him where he expected to find angels to live as he directed. In answer, Gregory true to his word, deposed bishops who were not obedient in the enforcement of the decrees. In some places it was found impossible to enforce the decree, and in such cases, Gregory bending to policy

allowed politics temporarily to overshadow religion. There was a continual round of letters from Pope Gregory to the bishops, urging them to enforce the decree, but the bishops were unable to overrule the united opposition of the clergy. Several bishops were excommunicated, but Gregory at length observed that purification must come from without the Church rather than from within, for the hierarchy could not render adequately efficient assistance.

The princes of Germany seeing an opportunity to increase their holdings by driving out the clergy, intrigued with the Pope against the married priests. With their assistance the Teutonic Church was aroused from its state of passive resistance, and a terrible condition of affairs followed in which many of the church offices were vacated. The priests endured much suffering. Reduced to poverty and unable to endure the scorn and contempt of those who had so lately honored them, many priests wandered away as homeless exiles. Their wives suffered even more cruelly, and stories are recounted of the fervor with which they vowed vengeance for the great wrong done them. The princes justified their conduct under the pretext of zeal for the Church.

Henry IV of Germany was of course greatly displeased at this disruption of the priesthood, brought about by the influence of an outside power, and accordingly had his bishops declare the degradation of Pope Gregory (1076). The princes in turn decreed the deposition of Henry who had already been excommunicated by the Pope. The people were incensed with Henry because he favored a practice popularly regarded as heresy. In 1085 the papalists under their king Hermann at a general assembly, forbade all commerce with women to those in orders; their rivals the imperialists lost no time in following suit. Three weeks later in a conference of Henry and his adherents at Mainz, marriage was formally prohibited to the priesthood. The influence of such tendencies was being reflected even in the lives of the laity, for throughout Germany, husbands and wives were separating and devoting themselves to church work without taking vows.

Pope Urban II adopted even more vigorous measures than Gregory had employed. Through his intrigues with the sons of Emperor Henry of Germany, that monarch was placed in prison, and thus was

established for all time the supremacy of the papacy over Germany. The enforcement of celibacy became only a matter of time. The priests of Germany were prohibited to marry or to retain the wife taken before ordination. Thus we observe the question of prohibition was settled, but the passions of men were still in array against the rules of an Institution. There was likewise a delay in enforcing the canon of celibacy in Hungary, Poland, Sweden, Denmark, and Friesland.

PROGRESS IN OTHER COUNTRIES.

Let us now take a brief glance at the progress of celibacy in France.

It seemed to be an almost impossible task to break down the stubbornness of the Norman priesthood. Marriage continued to be enjoyed though the zeal of the ecclesiastics and the greed of the nobles worked against it. William the Conqueror in his Dutchy of Normandy assisted the reform, but in Brittany opposed it on the ground of policy.

Although great confusion was caused by this attempt at reformation, it was perhaps not so great as the consternation in Germany. It was an age when "people hardly knew whether they were to adore their pastors as representatives of God or to dread

them as the powerful ministers of evil." (Lea pp.277).

In 1095 the Council of Clermont proclaimed the necessity of perfect purity in the ministers of the altar. However, those who sought to enforce celibacy, e.g. the archdeacons, were but poor examples themselves, some even supporting harems. Moreover, the clergy who should have been models for the people, led more shameful lives than those whose lives it was their duty to guide.

Calixtus II became pope in 1119. As a result of his determination, a council was called at Rheims, which was attended by representatives from Italy, France, Aquitaine, Spain, Germany, and England. The council strongly attacked the vices and corruption of the Church, and its action was more efficacious than that of any preceding council. In the endeavor to carry out the rules made, priests and clerks were beaten and maltreated even in the churches. Due no doubt to the stringent measures adopted as a result of the council, Calixtus was for a long time regarded as the originator of sacerdotal celibacy.

From France we glide over into Norman England and view conditions there.

The first step in the attempt to check the irregularities of the priesthood in England, was at the Council of Winchester in 1076. The action was very weak however, consisting only in the issuance of a declaration against the wives of men in orders. A council had been held at London in 1102, but the canons there adopted had met with slight obedience; it was found to be impossible to work such a sudden change in the lives of the Anglican clergy. Henry I viewed this laxity as presenting an opportunity for mercenary advantage, and determined to replenish his depleted treasury by the confiscation of property possessed by those who violated the canons of the Council of London. Another council was called by the king in London in the year 1108.

King Henry with Anselm worked arduously against the marriage of the clergy, and their efforts were rewarded with some apparent results. Upon the death of Anselm however, Henry's ardor temporarily cooled. Ecclesiastical officials were constantly being bribed for the granting of permission to have female intercourse, and the clergy forbidden their former wives, formed new relations. At such a crisis Pope Honorius II sent his cardinal, John of Crema to England

to enforce discipline, but his mission met with such opposition on the part of the clergy, that his labors in England were soon terminated.

At this juncture, the ardor of Henry seemed to return, and he began to grant shameless exemptions to the clergy who were willing to pay. This practice had two results: it gave a certain freedom to the clergy, and at the same time replenished the coffers of the king. It was a financial scheme pure and simple, and was termed the paying of a "Cullagium". Due to this practice and to other causes, an indiscriminate immorality seems to have arisen; the underlying reason for it all was of course the attempt to enforce an impossible asceticism.

Despite all these adverse conditions however, an irresistible pressure was being brought to bear upon the clergy and the triumph of the sacerdotal party was coming, though very gradually. We can assign no definite date to the enforcement of celibacy, but the Church was perhaps most indebted for the promotion of the cause of reform, to Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln, who was in office during the stormy reign of Henry III. The rule of celibacy was finally established and acknowledged, i. e., it was no longer

considered permissible to indulge, though concubinage still continued.

The clergy of Ireland and Scotland likewise resisted and refused to obey the law of celibacy.

As we hurriedly pass through Spain we observe that conditions there were even worse than in the other European countries. There was slight distinction made between laymen and clergy and marriage became the universal rule. The rule of celibacy received but meager attention during that period and the clergy for the most part were publicly married; a marked indifference to asceticism was prevalent. About the middle of the thirteenth century, Alphonso the Wise, of Castile, felt called to formally interdict matrimony to those in holy orders. In 1322 the Council of Palencia was convened. Its acts show the first authentic evidence of a custom which later became prevalent elsewhere, by which parishoners compelled the priest to take a female consort in order to protect the purity of their own families.

GENERAL PROGRESS.

Calixtus II had already labored vigorously

toward the enforcement of celibacy but he now takes one step in advance of former positions. At Rheims he had ordered the separation of the clergy and their wives; by the Lateran canon he now proclaims the sacrament of marriage to be less potent than the religious vow, the church connection was to overshadow all other ties. "This gave the final seal to the separation between the clergy and the laity, by declaring the priestly character to be indelible." (Lea pp.327). The priest was regarded as one set apart for the Church, and a great gulf was thereby fixed between him and the laity. This irrevocable nature of sacerdotalism aided greatly in establishing and consolidating the ecclesiastical power. But sacerdotal marriage was not yet eradicated.

Up to this point in the controversy, the practice of celibacy had been enjoined. Innocent II now makes it a doctrine of the Church that a union contracted in opposition to the rule of the Church, was not a marriage. The Church was now committed irrevocably to this doctrine and its consequences, for it was made a canon by the Second General Council of Lateran (1139). The Church recognized this method as the most effective so far tried in the effort to

enforce celibacy, and yet the results of even this measure were extremely slender.

Alexander II during his long pontificate was very vigorous in his advocacy of sacerdotal celibacy. And in Alexander we find another dignitary to whom contemporaries ascribed the honor of having established its observance. In giving advice as to how one might deal with certain married clerics, he said, that after an examination of the character of the parties concerned, those whom it was thought could maintain celibacy should be obliged to separate from their wives; while those unable to "contain" should not be interfered with. We are struck here with the arbitrary method employed in dealing with offenders; conflicting decisions were rendered thus even by the infallible popes.

Despite all the supervision and precautions in various portions of Germany, we note that the custom still prevailed, by which fathers substituted in their benefices the sons born during their priesthood. It was no uncommon occurrence to find parent and offspring laboring together in the same church; in some sections of Europe even the wife of the priest had assisted in the ministrations of the altar.

For two centuries, the efforts directed toward the adoption of celibacy had been unrelaxed, and at length won an inevitable triumph. The churches of Latin Christendom yielded one by one to the rule of St. Peter's successors, and ecclesiastics could no longer assume the most holy of earthly ties with the "sanction of heaven and the approbation of men." (Lea pp. 342). The papacy had its culmination in Innocent III, and as we glance back over the various pontiffs we note that those who most strongly advocated celibacy, were likewise most prominent in asserting the temporal and spiritual authority of the head of the Roman Catholic Church. Yet, the ostensible object of their advocacy of the rule of celibacy, was the purity of the Church and its ministers.

In France there arose the barbarous custom of prohibiting mothers, sisters, or other relations from living with men of holy orders. This with other restrictions only tended to increase the immorality so prevalent at the time. There is no denial of the fact that undisguised illicit unions and secret licentiousness were a universal and pervading vice of the Church throughout Christendom; it may be traced in the legislation of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and

fifteenth centuries. In the continued legislation for celibacy we cannot fail to detect the attempt to deprive the priest of his functions and benefices; also to deprive his children of their inheritance.

Since marriage was no longer sanctioned, the priests began the practice of taking mistresses. These mistresses of priests "acquired a certain honorable position among their fellows from the mere fact of their ministering to the unhallowed lusts of their pastors." (Lea pp.351). Such connections multiplied and the laity came to regard them as an established institution. In 1230 the civil authorities of Zurich, Switzerland, ordered priests to dismiss their women. The priests refused to comply with the command, and eventually were sustained in their position; a representative of Gregory IX seeking to enforce the canon, nearly forfeited his life in the attempt. The clergy maintained that they were flesh and blood, and could not live like angels, furthermore that they were unable to attend to the kitchen and other household duties. The rules prescribed for the clergy were too exacting for flesh and blood to endure, and "when the desires of men are once tempted to seek through unlawful means the relief denied to them by artificial

rules, it is not easy to set bounds to the unbridled passions, which, irritated by the fruitless effort at repression, are no longer restrained by a law which has been broken or a conscience which has lost its power." (Lea pp. 352.).

The records of the middle ages are full of the evidences of indiscriminate license. Indeed the people came to believe that an organized system of concubinage was preferable to allowing the pastor unbridled license in the parish; such a system seemed a necessary safeguard for the women of the community. It became the rule in some of the Swiss Cantons as it had in Spain to oblige the priest to select a concubine in order to provide adequate protection for the women of the parish. Surely under such conditions, the missionary and charitable efficiency of the priests was greatly hampered and diminished.

The efforts of Nicholas and Gregory ended sacerdotal marriage in Rome, but at the same time the morals of the Roman clergy became a glaring disgrace to Christendom. Even the papal court which should have shed abroad a good influence, was altogether corrupt.

So-called Heresies.

Toward the close of the twelfth century Manicheism was again discovered in the southern part of France, concealed under the names of Cathari, Paterins, Albigenses, etc. "The simplicity of the Manichean belief, its freedom from aspirations for temporal aggrandizement, and its denunciations of the immorality and grasping avidity of the priesthood found for it an appreciative audience and made ready converts." (Lea pp.370). These sects considered marriage as "an abomination and a mortal sin which could not be intensified by adultery or other excesses" (Lea pp.370). Though the Albigenses were strict ascetics, they were of a strongly antisacerdotal spirit, as was shown by the stubborn resistance to the enormous odds brought against them. These sects were desirous of overthrowing sacerdotalism, but wished to retain celibacy.

The Waldenses exalted poverty and condemned the pride and immorality of the clergy; they suffered persecution with the Albigenses, and many endured martyrdom. By an agreement made in the year 1538 however, the Waldenses declared marriage

permissible without exception of position, to all who had not received the gift of continence.

The Fraticelli had much in common with the other heresies, the common tie of antisacerdotalism binding them all together. This sect influenced Wickliffe and Huss in their work. Wickliffe was opposed to sacerdotalism but demended the retention of celibacy.

The Lollards denounced the rule of celibacy as the cause of the worst disorders, and urgently asked for its abrogation. They further maintained that the vows of the nuns were too severe. These people tended to shake the popular reverence for Rome.

The people of the age seemed blind to the significance of these numerous heresies; the scales had not yet been removed from their eyes. The hierarchy, it is true, was coming into greater veneration, but at the same time its vices were becoming more odious could the people but have perceived it.

GENERAL CONDITIONS IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

As we come to each succeeding century there seems to be merely a repetition of the recital of clerical immorality, and one wonders that it is

possible for conditions to grow worse. Surely the rule of celibacy is not proving very beneficial to the world, and a degraded state of morals follows in its train.

During the fifteenth century the great Council of Bâsel was convened, but its stringent legislation proved no more effective than that which had preceded; the evil course of the clergy continued. Fifteen years later, in 1450, Nicholas V attempted to check the mad course of the clerics, but in this very attempt is seen one of the causes which helped to perpetuate the corruption of the Church. He ordered that all persisting in keeping concubines in defiance of the regulations, should receive no benefices without special letters of indulgence from the Holy See. It was merely a degrading source of revenue thus practiced by the highest power, while such a method was condemned among churchmen of lesser importance. Of course there could be no reform with such universal venality and reckless expenditure at the papal court. Under the rule of such pontiffs as Innocent VIII and Alexander VI, immorality was on the increase.

In France the religious orders lost all sense of devotion and discipline, and were openly

negligent of their rule of celibacy. The clergy had really sunk below the the level of the laity.

In England also, terrible irregularities were prevalent. From the reign of Henry VIII is a record of "a memorial from the gentlemen and farmers of Carnarvonshire, complaining that the seduction of their wives and daughters was pursued systematically by the clergy." (Lea pp.392).

In Spain there was a similar infection. Even the Cis terciarian Order, the most strict of orders, yielded to the prevailing laxity. Savonarola declared that the nuns in the convents were worse than harlots.

In Germany the officiating clergy were directed not to retain their concubines and mistresses publicly in their houses.

Thus hastily we have viewed the conditions in the various countries. The clergy had become a stench in the nostrils of the people, for popular applause greeted any attack upon them. Celibacy came to be regarded as unnecessary and surely its advantages were a negative quantity. Many argued that the question should be optional; that there should be

universal liberty of conscience. The growing spirit of independence was reflected (July 1485) in the utterances of Jean Laillier, a priest. "He denied the supremacy of the Pope....., he rejected confession, absolution, and indulgences." (Lea pp. 400). He was opposed to celibacy and claimed that Gregory VII, who, in his mind had introduced the rule of celibacy in 1073, had really no power to institute it. His expression of the bare truth was about a half century too early.

THE REFORMATION---INFLUENCE ON CELIBACY.

The opening of the sixteenth century marked the breaking down of the landmarks of thought.

Erasmus was a prominent figure during this period. With his sarcastic humor and biting satire he vigorously attacked the vices of monks and priests. The people applauded lustily for he was giving expression to the popular thought. A century earlier, writings such as his would have condemned a man to prison, but in the new spirit of independence he enjoyed the approbation of all classes.

Luther in the early portion of his attack seemed to ignore the subject of celibacy; this is

peculiar, since, actuated by a desire to reform abuses, he was attacking the system of the Roman Catholic Church, a portion of whose claim to exclusive sanctity rested upon celibacy. In 1520 he denied the indelible character of priestly ordination, which was closely allied to celibacy. It is strange that he failed, at first, to recognize that "his doctrine of justification by faith destroyed the efficacy of celibacy, as of all other ascetic observances." (Lea pp.411).

The followers of Luther, however, were more alert on this particular subject of celibacy, and during Luther's seclusion at the Wartburg (April 1521-March 1522), they led an attack on the institution. Bartholomew Bernhardt, a pastor near Wittenburg, solved the matter by marrying. He later published an apology in which he denounced the rule of celibacy; he was persecuted but continued in the functions of his priestly office until death, while others who followed his example suffered for it.

The friends of Luther, without his consent, propagated the idea of sacerdotal marriage, and Luther's own Augustinian Order declared the monasteries thrown open and marriage permitted to all as being consonant with the Gospel. In this action we note a

radical rebellion in an old order. Luther was evidently influenced by the action of his friends, and toward the close of 1522, he accepted their views; there is abundant proof of this in the fact that Luther himself married in 1525.

Zwingli and his followers petitioned for the right of marriage in Switzerland.

The great mass of the people were in sympathy with granting permission to marry, which shows how widely diffused and strongly implanted was the conviction of the evils of celibacy. Four centuries earlier, cruel persecution would have fallen to the lot of pastors who married; now the people stood ready to support those who contracted the marriage tie.

The contest between Protestants and Catholics was waging hotly. Protestants demanded the abrogation of the rule of celibacy, but Paul III refused to accede to their request, though Charles (Emperor of Germany) had already granted it. However, Paul found it to be good policy to forward a despatch to Germany (1549), granting to the clergy, under certain restrictions, the permission to marry; also offering dispensations to deserving married priests.

"At the Diet of Augsburg in 1555, the states

and cities of the Augsburg Confession were confirmed in their right to enjoy the practice of their religion in peace." (Lea pp.434). "The long struggle thus was over. The public law of Germany at least recognized the legality of the transactions based upon the Reformation, and not the least in importance among these transactions were the marriages of the ministers of Christ." (Lea pp.434). Marriage now became the common rule. So much for the influence upon the Protestant Church. We have now to note what influence the contest exerted upon the discipline of the Catholic Church.

The Catholic Church realized the necessity of purifying itself if it would retain that veneration of the people which was essential to its very existence.

In 1528, the Cardinal Duprat, Chancellor of France held a council at Paris, in which the new doctrines were condemned as heresies, and the rule of celibacy was made a point of faith. Canons were also adopted which aimed at the immoral practices of the clergy, but as on previous occasions the action proved ineffective.

About this time there was a very urgent demand for a general council, but difficulty was experienced in finding a suitable place and in securing delegates to attend. In the meantime the rules of the Diet of Augsburg were presented in a modified form, but the local councils which were organized to enforce the decrees proved incompetent for their task.

After continued agitation however, the Great Council of Trent was convened on June 27, 1562. Duke Albert brought the matter of celibacy before the Council by asking for ecclesiastical marriage. He was Duke of Bavaria, and those dukes had always been ardent supporters of Rome in the Church of Germany. Hence in his request we note a marked change in policy; the reason for this change is, that the evils of celibacy have been fully recognized. The Council evaded immediate action on the matter. In the same year however, Emperor Ferdinand also urged its consideration; his delegates presented a plan for the reform of the Church which "called attention to the necessity of purifying the morals of the regular and secular clergy, but demanded that to some nations at least, the privilege of sacerdotal marriage

should be conceded." (Lea pp.449). There is a document bearing the names of Ferdinand and Albert, which declares the necessity of granting the right of marriage; it says in part, "Not one Catholic priest out of fifty could be found who lived chastely."

(Lea pp.449). In this document it is again emphasized that the right to marry was not merely desired by and the preference of the clergy, but that the laity demanded the right of marriage for the priests. They believed it better to have a married priesthood than a concubinary one.

The Council of Trent however, rejected all such recommendations, for they were most repulsive to Rome's policy of a thousand years. There was a prolonged discussion on this important subject, but it was for the most part unfavorable to sacerdotal marriage. Finally, on November 11, 1563, the canons on matrimony were adopted. Of these, two relate to our subject and they are as follows: "The first one pronounced a dread anathema on all who should dare to assert that clerks in holy orders, monks or nuns, could contract marriage; or that such a marriage was valid, and it added that God would not deny the gift of chastity to those who rightly sought it, nor would

he expose us to temptation beyond our strength. The other similarly anathematized all those who dared to assert that the married state was more worthy than virginity, or that it was not better to live in celibacy than married." (Lea pp.453). The Council wished to place the rule of celibacy beyond the reproach of those who compared the reckless life of the priest with the calm and virtuous life of the Protestant pastor. Hence this simple rule of discipline was elevated to the dignity of a point of belief. This decision of the Council condemned as heretics the whole body of the Church during three quarters of its previous existence.

The Council published certain provisions which were to curb the vice which was known to be ineradicable. These provisions were little more than those which had been enacted every century since Siricius, and there is no necessity of repeating them. These then, were the regulations which the last general council of the Catholic Church thought sufficient to relieve the established curse which had been ubiquitous for one thousand years. They contain nothing which had not been tried before, but with slight success. Indeed they did not seem so efficacious as

the decrees of Charles V and his bishops which had been promulgated a few years previous and which had failed so lamentably.

CONCLUSION.

We have been tracing the course of development in the controversy relating to the celibacy of the priesthood, and have noted its influence upon the priesthood and laity. WE have observed how in the beginning, celibacy was voluntary, arising from a strong ascetic spirit, but that it later became obligatory; the combined influence of sacerdotal and hierarchical interests gradually enforced it in the West. This was all for the advantage of the hierarchy, but to the detriment of morality and opposed to nature and Scripture. Catholicism has been instrumental in elevating the level of woman, but in Evangelical Protestant countries, her position is higher intellectually and morally than in exclusively Roman Catholic countries.

Clerical marriages have usually proved happy, and have given rise to a larger number of useful and distinguished men and women than those of

any other class. Marriage is instituted of God, and when man seeks to forbid it he is infringing upon the prerogatives of the Omniscent Father, and his attempts are doomed to failure.

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