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WITH WHOM IS THE CATHOLIC CHURCH UNPOPULAR?

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Analysis Of A Common Objection

“I have never been interested in the Catholic Church because of its unpopularity.”

This declaration expresses a state of mind, which controls millions of people.

But let us analyze such a frame of mind. If it be logical, then the same millions could not have been followers of Christ in His day because of *His* unpopularity. There must, therefore, be something wrong with it from the Christian viewpoint.

If such a frame of mind be logical, the same millions could not have accepted Christianity in the days when the Apostles were still living, yet would they not swear that the early Church was right?

The Church of Christ has been unpopular with certain classes from the day of its birth until our present time. But with whom? With Scribes and Pharisees; with Herods and High Priests of other religious bodies; with organizations, which would destroy Christianity itself. These, in turn, have always influenced the masses as they did in Christ's day; as they did in Nero's day; as they did in the days of Wickliffe, Huss, Luther, Henry VIII, Calvin, Campbell, Marx, Lenin, Calles, Azana, and other religious and political leaders.

At any time in history, whether it was a thousand years before Protestantism was born, or after its establishment in several countries in Europe, whenever an ambitious emperor or king, or prince found the Church in his way he joined causes with some ecclesiastic, who also was on the point of rebellion. Civil rulers and evil-minded ecclesiastics did this in the days of Christ, in the days of the apostles, in the late middle-ages, and are doing it in our day.

Some civil rulers after seeking divorces from their wives or other favors which the Church could not grant, severed connections with the Church, while they were wont to allege other reasons, such as: "We have found this man (meaning the pope) perverting our nation and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar" (Luke XXIII, 2.)

How often have we seen rival religious leaders imitate the jealous churchmen of Christ's day and declare: "If we let Him alone, all will believe in Him; and the Romans will come and take away our place and nation." (John XI, 48)?

How often have we seen conscienceless aspirants for high office attack the Church for fear it would later attack their tyrannical or unjust rule?

What Did Christ Say About It?

What does Christ foretell about the unpopularity of His religion? He says:

“If they have called the goodman of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of his household?” (Matt. X, 24-25)

He says: “If you had been of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world . . . therefore the world hateth you” (John XV, 19).

He says: “You shall be hated by all nations for My name’s sake” (Matt. XXIV, 9).

He says: “If the world hate you, know ye that it hath hated Me before you” (John XV, 18).

He says: “The world hateth Me because I testify of it that its works are evil”—a good cause for which to be hated (John VII. 7).

He says: “For they shall deliver you up in councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues. And you shall be brought before governors, and before kings for My sake. . . And you shall be hated by all men for My sake.” (Matt. X, 17).

“Yea, the hour cometh that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doeth a service to God.” (John XVI, 2).

He says: “Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice’s sake; for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are you when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake: rejoice and be exceeding glad: because your reward is very great in Heaven.” (Matt. V, 11).

Again We Ask “With Whom?”

With which present-day forces is the Catholic Church most unpopular?

Is it not with forces which are *fundamentally* as anti-Protestant as anti-Catholic; as anti-religious as anti-good government? She is opposed most by the Communist, the radical Socialist, the anarchist; by atheistic organizations and, of course, by public men who hope to profit by the ascendancy of these forces.

We have instances in Russia, in Mexico, and in Spain. At the time the present provisional President of the Spanish Republic was selected we were told in the daily papers:

"The shift in the Government brought bands of communists and anti-clericals singing the 'Red Flag' through the streets of Madrid." The same press dispatches told us that many delegates fought vigorously for a government favorable to the Church, but "were overrun by the socialist steamroller." All through the press reports we note the underlying reasons for opposition to the Church. It is said, for instance, "too much property belonged to the Church"; "too many children were being educated in religious schools"; "there has been no divorce law in Spain." In other words, the time has come to attack both her faith and her morals, not in the name of a better religion, but of irreligion.

Are there actually reasons why people who have sympathy for the

Christian religion generally, such as members of Protestant religious bodies, should rejoice over persecution of the Catholic Church? Do not be deceived: if any single Protestant organization commanded the spiritual allegiance of nearly all the people in any given country, and that organization stood for religious instruction and the practise of morality in accordance with the standards of the gospel, it would receive the same treatment the Catholic Church has received at the hands of hidden enemies of Christ.

Why Do Civil Rulers Oppose Her?

Civil rulers would never have made war on the Church, if she had been willing to become their tool. The principal reason why civil rulers wished to be supreme in the spiritual as well as the temporal order was that they might hush the voice of the religion over which they presided, the predominant religion of the land,

and use it to promote their own selfish interests. The Greek Schismatic Church never developed much outside the territory of its establishment, because it was too closely allied to the civil governments of that area. In Jugo-Slavia to-day, the Greek Orthodox Church predominates, and is encouraged by the king, who himself is only a nominal member thereof, because that church will always do his bidding. Catholics in the same country, more religious and nearly as strong in number, have little favor with the government, but principally because their Church will not desert the teachings or the moral law of Christ in order to please him. Do you suppose there would have been any persecution of the Church in Mexico if the Church were willing to bow sycophantly before Carranza and Calles while they lent themselves to the promotion of irreligion and personally profited by loot and even directed murder?

Character Of Enemies Should Make Her Respected

The Church should really become popular because of the character of her professed enemies. Were not the anarchist Ferrerites of Barcelona, who waged war on the Catholic Church, some years ago committed to principles subversive of orderly civil government as well? The Communists of Russia, opposed to religion of every form, are particularly hostile to the Catholic religion, knowing that it alone has inherent power to endure.

If you would not defend the infidelity of Renan or Voltaire or Rousseau or Diderot, then you cannot defend the opposition to the Catholic Church which they stirred up. If you have no sympathy for the Grand Orient in Latin countries, whose primary purpose is to promote international atheism and warfare on religion generally, then you cannot be in sympathy with the aggressive warfare which was waged against the Church at different times during

the past century in Spain, Italy, Portugal, Mexico, Central America.

As a true-blooded American are you really proud of the secret propaganda conducted against the Catholic Church by the Know-Nothing Party, by the A. P. A. Party, by the Guardians of Liberty, by the Klu Klux Klan, most of whose members insisted on their identity being concealed, and most of whose leaders would have been as strongly *for* the Catholic Church as against it, if such policy paid them as well in coin of the realm?

There was a day when practically all civilized nations belonged to the Catholic Church, and all these nations were happily united under a Christian League of Nations. Without any force, but by spontaneous common consent, the head of the Catholic Church was their Supreme Court of Appeal when their civil rulers were guilty of malfeasance in office. The Church was popular among all those who followed the Christian way of

living; the head of the Church was trusted more than any other power.

Hostile Propaganda For Centuries

Therefore the unpopularity of the Church in our day, or at any other time, when not due to the strict discipline of the Catholic Church, must be and is due to hostile propaganda for national or selfish purposes.

This prooaganda originated with civil rulers, who broke with Rome in the sixteenth century, who became wealthy by the confiscation of property of the Church, who banished the clergy of the Church in order that the people might not be instructed in the Catholic faith, and who directed movements to educate the people in an opposite direction, both by literature and preaching, who rewarded the anti-Catholic and penalized the Catholic.

Historians of those days were the *official* historians of the ruling powers, who were ordered to praise

the persecutor and condemn the persecuted. While history was written in this one-sided way the records of the Church, the story of Church history covering centuries, documents calculated to injure both the character and the story of the new writers and their abettors, were ordered destroyed. Historians since that day have, for the most part, based their narratives on the records sedulously preserved by heirs of the original offenders—records which, according to one of the most eminent of historians, disclosed a clear “conspiracy against the truth”.

But Is The Church Really Unpopular ?

Despite the open hostility directed against the Catholic Church by organized effort and promoted consciously or unconsciously by churchmen of other religious organizations, the Catholic Church is by far the most popular church in Christendom. It claims a membership of some 325,-

000,000 people belonging to practically every race and nationality. It is the only Church which can claim practical universality. It is the Church of the common people, of the poor, who, in the words of Christ "would always be with us" and to preach to whom, also according to His own words, was His principal mission. On any given Sunday of the year it is safe to say that there are three or four times as many people in the Catholic churches as in all the Protestant churches combined.

Her temples are the only ones which are visited by large numbers on weekdays, and in which the prophecy of the Prophet Malachy is literally fulfilled, through the fact of a "clean oblation being offered to the Almighty from the rising to the setting of the sun" someplace. Never is there a moment of our day or night in which God is not worshipped publicly in the presence of a considerable number of people.

The Catholic Church is, therefore, the most popular Church with about

two-thirds of all the Christians in the world, even if it is the most unpopular with the other one-third, and with the groups of people who are enemies of the cross of Christ and enemies of religion itself.

Good Works Should Make Her Popular

Those who are not aroused to sympathy for the Catholic Church by the beauty of her faith, by her long record of loyalty to the Master, by the saints she has produced in every century, should be attracted to her because of what she is doing to-day and has always done for suffering humanity. Until the care of the deaf and the dumb, the blind, the feeble-minded, the orphan, the aged, the poor, the unfortunate, was converted into a business by the state, it was a service of love performed in sweet charity's name by the Catholic Church.

Even to-day she conducts more homes for each one of the groups just

enumerated than all other religious and fraternal organizations taken together. More than half the hospitalization attention in the United States takes place in her institutions. It need not be stated that hospitals are not operated for profit. They afford the modern outlet for the care of the sick whom many old Religious Communities of Women formerly nursed in their respective homes. A religious motive inspires Catholic mercy and charity, whether dispensed in an institution or in the homes of the afflicted.

That motive is the service of Christ through "the least of His brethren," in whom He is represented. The religious motive is inspired by the pleasure which our divine Savior says He receives from service performed for the needy and the suffering in His name; "For I was hungry and you gave Me to eat; I was thirsty and you gave Me to drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in, naked and you covered Me; sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and

you came to Me. . . Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these, My least brethren, you did it to Me" (Matt. XXV, 35-40).

The care of the afflicted by the state or county is handled as an economic and social necessity, as a need which must be met by no individual or religious organization in particular, and therefore, of necessity must be met by the Community. When the Catholic Church does make it her business to provide for the religious and spiritual care of any class of unfortunates, she does it because she believes that the furtherance of spiritual and corporal works of mercy should characterize the religion of Him, Whose life is summed up in the words: "He went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed" (Acts X, 38).

The Savior Of Our Civilization

It might seem, at first blush, paradoxical to credit the Catholic Church

with saving society even in these, our own times, when it has been generally taken for granted that the Catholic Church has always been an obstructionist. But lay your prejudices aside just for a moment, and think. We have already referred to the anarchistic, the bolshevistic and the socialistic forces which have been hard at work to destroy the Catholic Church. It must be assumed, therefore, that the Catholic Church must be equally opposed to these forces. But are these not the very forces which have been doing their utmost to destroy constitutional government, whether in Russia, Germany, Austria, Hungary, China?

Catholics constitute only two-fifths of the population of Germany, yet the political party, which has saved Germany from Sovietism and even from chaos, has been the Center, or so-called Catholic Party. Vienna was captured by radical socialists in the year 1922, and Austria as a whole would have fallen before these forces were it not for a Catholic prelate.

The Communists had possession of Budapest, Hungary, shortly after the World War, and were routed by the unifying influence of the Catholic Church. Jugo-Slavia was largely saved from the radicals through a Catholic clergyman Prime Minister. Ask Protestant Holland how much she owes to a Catholic leader.

Nearly every recent professional anti-Catholic agitator in the United States has been a socialist of the extreme type. In proof of this we would only ask you to read our booklet entitled "DEFAMERS OF THE CHURCH". Nearly every anti-Catholic paper and magazine circulated widely fifteen years ago was published by socialists, and they became aggressively anti-Catholic in order to secure the support of people who had no interest in Socialism, but who could be easily wrought up by the bogey of the "Catholic danger".

The greatest socialist leaders who ever lived said repeatedly that the only obstacle to the introduction of

socialism internationally is the international Catholic Church. If this is not saying that the Catholic Church has been the savior of society and, to a great degree, of Christian civilization, what is the meaning of it?

The Catholic Church Has Saved Protestantism 11

If you are interested in the Christian religion at all you are grateful that the fundamental Christian beliefs have been preserved to our day. But by whom were they preserved?

Protestantism claims to rest on the Bible, but where did Protestantism obtain the Bible if not from the Catholic Church? The Bible has been a target of vehement attack not only by infidels but by Protestant modernists, and the most powerful voice raised in defense of the genuineness and the inspiration of Holy Scripture has been that of the Catholic Church.

By her very feasts, such as Christmas, Good Friday, Easter and Pentecost she keeps before the world the

traditional Christian beliefs concerning the Incarnation, the Redemption, the establishment of a divine kingdom in this world.

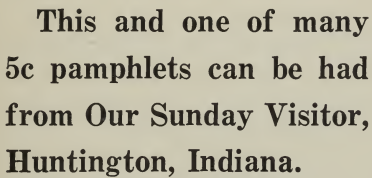
Who has been a defender half so staunch as the Catholic Church of the indissolubility of the marriage bond? When the Supreme Head of the Catholic Church speaks in defense of fundamentals of Christian faith and morality his words reach not only his own children who constitute nearly two-thirds of all the Christians of the world, but professed Protestants and other non-Catholics as well. In these utterances he defends the best that is in Protestantism as well as he defends the Catholic faith.

If by any possibility the Catholic Church passed out of existence do you honestly believe that Protestantism would survive a single generation? Nearly all anti-Christian efforts are directed against the Catholic Church with the boast that if she can be destroyed Christianity itself will fall with her.

Humanly speaking the Catholic Church should be unpopular only with enemies of Christianity. Her unpopularity with others must be due to the false impressions they entertain concerning her, to the prejudices which they have imbibed in relation to her.

The Catholic Church is a standing rebuke to the irreligious, to the scoffer, to the immoral, to the dishonest. It is generally admitted that her people attend public worship better, pray more, practice self-denial to a greater degree, train their children more religiously, attach greater sanctity to marriage, rate purity higher, condemn the social evil more vehemently, defend the divine inspiration of the Bible more consistently than any other religious organization.

Why then should the Catholic Church be unpopular with those who would be with God rather than with the world, with Christ rather than against Him?



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