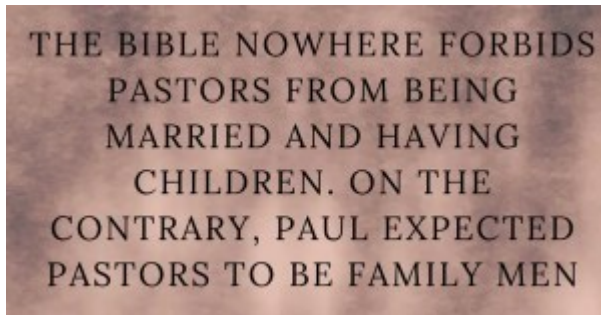


The Papal System – XVI. The Celibacy of the Clergy



Continued from [The Papal System – XV. Marriage.](#)

THE most cruel feature of the whole papal system is the enforced celibacy of the priests. Heaven never gave a greater earthly boon to an anxious toiling man, laboring with his mind, or working with his hands, than an affectionate wife. And no man needs the sympathies and encouragements of a faithful companion more than the minister of Jesus. To rob him of the one whom Providence fitted to make his home pleasant and his life happy and useful, is a high-handed crime against the wronged, for which a retributive Providence inflicts its own punishment.

A man with a loving wife and dutiful children has his sympathies drawn out, his affections cultivated, and his heart enlarged. His domestic relations only give him additional fitness for general usefulness. The man, without some such training of the heart, feeling that, while he has the respect of many, no one has any special interest in him, is shut up within himself, and is naturally careless about the joys and sorrows of the world. The tendency of celibacy is to kill sympathy, to crucify love, and to bind its victims in chains of selfishness that shall restrain every outburst of affection and every generous emotion.

Christ never instituted Celibacy.

He ordained marriage in the sinless bowers of Eden. The first blushes of wedded love painted the cheeks of Adam's bride, before one stain of sin polluted man, or anything he touched. The Saviour's first miracle honored some humble wedding, and gave his approbation in the most emphatic manner to marriage.

According to Paul, no class of men or ministers are deprived of wedded rights. "Have we not power," he says, "to carry about *a woman, a sister*, as well as the rest of the apostles, and the brethren of the Lord and Cephas?" (Catholic version, 1 Cor. ix. 5.) The word translated "power," in the original is authority; the word rendered "woman" means wife as well. Cephas or Peter was certainly married; and the apostle's meaning unquestionably is: We have Christ's license to take a wife, who is a sister in the Lord, as the other apostles, and the brethren of the Lord have done; and Peter. Eusebius quotes Clement of Alexandria as saying that "Peter and Philip had children;

and Paul did not demur in a certain place to mention his own wife, whom he did not take about with him, in order the better to expedite his ministry; and that blessed Peter, seeing his own wife led-away to execution, was delighted on account of her calling and return to her country (heaven)."

In the Catholic version, 1 Tim. iii. 2,4 Paul says: "It behoveth a bishop to be blameless; the husband of one wife, sober, prudent, of good behaviour, chaste, given to hospitality, a teacher . . . one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection, with all chastity (gravity)." If Paul is right, a bishop ought to be a husband; and ought to rule his house well, keeping his children orderly. In the Catholic version, Heb. 13:4, Paul again says: "Marriage, *honorable in all*." Then, if Paul was not mistaken, it would be respectable in a nun, a monk, a priest, a bishop, or even a pope; and he who contradicts Paul tries to make the spirit of God a liar, who spoke through him. Apostles, it is said in the Holy Book, may lead about a wife; a bishop ought to be the husband of one wife, and marriage is honorable *in all*.

The Clergy married in the Second Century.

Tertullian, arguing against second marriages, says to a widow: "That you may then marry in the Lord, according to the law and the apostle, if you are still concerned for this, have you such assurance as to demand that (second) marriage, which it is not lawful for them to enter upon from whom you demand it, that is from the bishop *who is but once married* and from the presbyters and deacons in the same state, and from the widows whose society you refuse?" At this period marriage was the privilege of all the clergy—bishops, priests and deacons; but only one union was permitted.

Celibacy in the Third Century.

Mosheim gives a faithful record of the laws of marriage and of the growing conviction of the sanctity of a single life, when he says, about the third century: "Marriage was allowed to all the clergy from the highest rank to the lowest; yet those were accounted more holy and excellent who lived in celibacy; for it was the general impression that those who lived in wedlock were much more exposed to the assaults of *evil spirits* than others." Surely women have improved since then, or common sense has. Good men in the ministry to increase their usefulness, in view of the prejudices becoming current among the people, often doomed themselves to a single life. And many of the clergy, as well as a large number of the people, caught the plague of celibacy just beginning to affect Christians at this time. Still marriage was common throughout the ministry.

There was in this century a great troubler of Cyprian, a presbyter of Carthage, a man full of all wickedness, according to his bishop. Cyprian wrote a letter about him to Cornelius, Bishop of Rome; and in it among other weighty charges brought against him, he says: "He was the cause of his wife's proving abortive, by kicking and ill-using her." Cyprian brings no charge against Novatus for having a wife and living with her, but for his brutal treatment of her.

The Beginning of the Fourth Century.

Two little councils gave the stigma, by statute, to the marriage of the clergy at this period. One of these, it is supposed, was held at Elvira, in Spain, about A.D. 305; its numbers were small, its intelligence, with the exception of Hosius, if he was in it, low, and its canons worthless. The thirty-third canon of this illustrious body of supposed Spaniards, "prescribed celibacy to priests and deacons," and its sixty-fifth declares that, "If a clergyman knows that his wife commits adultery and sends her not away, he is unworthy of the communion of the Church even at the point of death." "The latter canon shows that clergymen had wives at that time.

Another insignificant, and almost unknown convention, was called the Council of Neocaesarea. It is supposed to have been held about A.D. 314. Its first canon says: "If a priest marries, after he has been ordained, he ought to be degraded." Its eighth canon declares that, "If a clergyman's wife commit adultery, he ought to divorce her upon pain of being deprived of his ministry." It is worthy of remark that neither of these councils ordered married bishops, priests, or other ministers to forsake wives whom they had already wedded.

CELIBACY AND THE COUNCIL OF NICE.

This was the first regular council of the Christian Church that ever was held; the martyrdoms which preceded it, the heroic sufferings of some of its members for Christ, and the presence and patronage of the first Christian Emperor, made it the most authoritative assembly of ecclesiastics ever held since the Saviour's death. Into that body celibacy, full of rottenness and death, but sprinkled over with a delicious odor of remarkable sanctity, was dragged; and an effort was made to impose its useless and infamous obligations upon the clergy. Paphnutius, an Egyptian bishop, was its most eloquent enemy. In times of persecution his right eye had been dug out with a sword, and the socket seared with a red hot iron; his left leg was powerless, for he had been hamstrung by the same cruel hands; he had been brought up in a monastery from childhood, and as all knew, he intended for himself a celibate life in the future; and when the decree came up for discussion, requiring bishops, presbyters, or deacons to give up their wives whom they had married when laymen, "The divine Paphnutius, standing in the midst of a crowd of bishops cried with a loud voice, saying:

'Do not make the yoke of the priesthood grievous, for it is said marriage is honorable, and the bed undefiled. Take heed lest by an excess of severity ye rather hurt the Church; for it is said all men cannot endure the denial of all the affections. No one, I think, will be preserved in chastity when each man is deprived of his own wife. I regard the intercourse of each one with his lawful wife as virtuous chastity; and that she cannot be separated whom God has joined, and whom the man once married when a reader, a singer, or a layman.'

The great Paphnutius uttered these sentiments though ignorant of marriage, because from childhood he was brought up in a monastery. Wherefore the whole assembly of the bishops, persuaded by the counsel of the man, were silent about this question, leaving it to the judgment of those so disposed, by mutual consent to leave their wives."

Gelasius, Bishop of Czesarea, in Palestine, from whose "History of the Nicene Council" this is an extract, flourished about A. D. 476, and wrote about one hundred and fifty years after the council was held. Sozomen, who compiled his history, as is commonly thought, about A.D. 443, says:

"Some thought that a law ought to be passed enacting that bishops and presbyters, deacons and sub-deacons, should hold no intercourse with the wife whom they had married before they entered the priesthood; but Paphnutius, the confessor, testified against this proposition; he said that marriage was honorable and chaste, and advised the synod not to frame a law which it would be difficult: to observe, and which might serve as an occasion of incontinence to them and their wives. . . . The synod refrained from enacting the proposed law, leaving the matter to the decision of individual judgment."

Socrates, who wrote his admirable history about the same time, says:

"When it was proposed to deliberate on this matter, Paphnutius, having arisen in the midst of the assembly of bishops, earnestly entreated them not to impose so heavy a yoke upon the ministers of religion; asserting that marriage is honorable among all, and the nuptial bed undefiled; so that they ought not to injure the Church by too severe restrictions. For all men, said he, cannot bear the practice of rigid continence; neither, perhaps, would the chastity of each of their wives be preserved. He described the intercourse of a man with his lawful wife as chastity... .. The whole assembly of the clergy assented to the reasoning of Paphnutius, wherefore they silenced all further debate on this point, leaving it to those who were husbands to exercise their own discretion in reference to their wives."

The Catholic Du Pin writes about this transaction:

"The other story concerns Paphnutius, a bishop in Egypt, who resisted the canon which was proposed in the Council (of Nice) for obliging bishops, priests, and deacons to observe celibacy. This good man said, 'Though I have lived all my life in celibacy, yet I do not think that this yoke ought to be imposed on the clergy.' Some question the truth of this story; I believe they do it rather for fear lest this story might prejudice the present discipline (papal celibacy) than for any solid proof they have for it."

There is no more ground for doubt about the decision of the Council of Nice in favor of the proposition of Paphnutius than there is for calling in question the existence of the council itself. Stanley says, "Paphnutius has been rewarded by the gratitude of the whole Eastern Church (Christian communities), which still, according to the rule which he proposed, allows, and now almost enjoins, marriage on all its clergy before ordination, without permitting it afterwards."

This discussion at Nice and the decision of the Synod give a death-blow to all the traditionary falsehoods collected and consecrated by the Church of Rome to prove that clergymen who had wives renounced them when they assumed

the office of minister, following the supposed example even of the apostles. The ancient Church, before the Council of Nice, never required such a sacrifice, and the Eastern Church never demanded it afterwards. The apostles never set such an example, nor hinted at the propriety of perpetrating such a folly.

While Du Pin asserts of the fourth century that, "Celibacy was obligatory on bishops, priests, and deacons, in the West," he admits that, "This law was not established in the East." And he might have added that the obligation was repudiated by some of the first minds in the West, and rejected by large numbers of the clergy.

Other Testimonies about Celibacy in the Fourth Century.

The Council of Gangra, an unimportant ecclesiastical convention, held in the latter part of the fourth century, condemned the errors of Eustathius; and among the heresies it denounced was his rejection "of both the benediction and the communion of a presbyter who continued to live with a wife, whom he may have lawfully married, before entering into holy orders." Celibacy had not reached the height, in the churches, which it had obtained in the creed of Eustathius.

Socrates tells us that, "There have been among them (the clergy) many bishops who have had children by their lawful wives during their episcopate."

The council which deposed Paul of Samosata put another in his place called Domnus, "The son of Demetrianus, of blessed memory, who before this presided with much honor over the same church, a man fully endowed with all the excellent qualities of a bishop." Here a bishop's son succeeds his father by the choice of a whole council.

Spyridion, Bishop of Trimithon, in Cyprus, flourished about A.D. 824. Sozomen speaks of the wonderful works which he wrought by divine assistance, and of his remarkable virtues, and he says that "he was married and had children." One of his daughters received a deposit from a friend, and for greater security she buried it. She died soon after, and the treasure committed to Irene was demanded from her father; he could not find it; and he was in despair. He went to his daughter's grave and obtained the information he needed from her spirit, and he discovered the treasure and restored it.

The Council of Toledo, A.D. 400, by its first canon forbids priests or deacons to reach higher offices in the Church than those they already enjoy should they continue to live with their wives. This was only a trifling penalty. Any good deacon or priest would sacrifice promotion for a happy home. Its seventh canon gives clergymen, whose "wives do not behave well," authority to bind them and shut them up in their houses, and it forbids them to eat with them till they had done penance; the eighteenth declares that we ought not to communicate with the widow of a bishop, or of a priest, or of a deacon, if she marries again, It is plain to the most unreasoning that at this time in Spain the marriage of all ranks of the clergy was a recognized fact.

Celibacy in the Fifth Century.

Synesius, Bishop in Cyrene, when appointed to the episcopal office refused to separate from his wife. "God," said he, "and the law, and the holy hand of Theophilus bestowed on me my wife. I declare therefore, solemnly, and call you to witness, that I will not be plucked from her, nor live with her in secret like an adulterer. But I hope and pray that we may have many and virtuous children." Synesisu was duly installed, and highly respected notwithstanding his wife.

The Council of Carthage, held about A. D. 418, in canon twenty-one forbids clergymen's sons to marry heretical or heathen wives. Surely at this time the sons of ministers were a recognized and somewhat numerous class in the African churches.

It was ordered by a council held in Ireland, A.D. 456, in its sixth canon, that the wives of ecclesiastics from the doorkeeper to the priest should never go around otherwise than veiled. Showing that at this period the ministers of the infant Church of Ireland were allowed to marry.

The Sixth Century.

Celibacy in the West made some progress in this age. Yet we have the testimony of venerable Bede that Gregory the Great, Pope of Rome, who died A.D. 605, was the great grandson of another pope. Says he: "Gregory was by nation a Roman, son of Gordian, deducing his race from ancestors that were not only noble, but religious. And Felix, once bishop of the same apostolical see, a man of great honor in Christ, and in his Church, was his great grandfather." Felix was Bishop of Rome early in the sixth century, and must have been married, notwithstanding the matrimonial prohibitions of Pope Siricius, A.D. 385.

In the Seventh Century.

The Council of Trullo, held in the tower of the emperor's palace called Trullus, in its thirteenth canon prohibits "THE SEPARATION OF PRESBYTERS, DEACONS, OR SUB-DEACONS FROM THEIR WIVES, OR BINDING THEM TO CHASTITY BEFORE THEY ARE ORDAINED." This council was held A.D. 692.

The forty-eighth canon of this council ordered the wives of those who where made bishops to be put away from them into a monastery, at a distance from their husbands.

Celibacy in the Ninth, Tenth, and Eleventh Centuries.

In the ninth century the wives of priests were openly acknowledged, and were known as priestesses; and their husbands were charged with marrying off their daughters, with churches for dowries, Later still, there were four married bishops in Brittany in France; those of Quimper, Vannes, Rennes, and Nantes. The Bishop of Dole made free with the property of the Church to set up his daughters in wedded splendor. The priest's wife took her place near her husband, and not far from the altar; and the wife of the bishop claimed precedence over a countess. Throughout the whole of Normandy the priests

married wives, and became fathers of sons and daughters, to whom they frequently left their churches. And while there was a sort of conviction that it was more pious in a clergyman not to marry, yet no one regarded his matrimonial relations as a crime. Among the lower orders of the priesthood marriage was most prevalent.

Gregory VII. and Celibacy.

This pontiff, on his accession to the papal throne, found priests in every direction, either with faithful wives or base mistresses, surrounded by children rendering them dependent upon the wealthy, or upon the Church to secure a comfortable settlement for their families; and as his ruling idea was to make the Church queen of the rich, of the great, and of all governments, he at once resolved to break up the families of priests; and by this step to make the ministers of the Church independent of the patronage of the wealthy and powerful. He assembled a synod at Rome, A.D. 1074, and forthwith decrees were issued ordering an immediate separation between priests and women. These laws were recommended by the most ferocious threatenings; and at first some "yielded, pretending that it was right, for the sake of gain and vain boasting, but many added adultery to incontinence. Moreover, *few regarded continency*," that is, nearly all the clergy were living with wives, or were the associates of immoral women.

The most intense excitement spread throughout France, Germany, and Italy. The decree of Gregory came as if such a law was "*entirely new and unheard of*," a wicked and unprovoked invasion of the dearest earthly rights of innocent persons. Frenzied indignation burst forth in tens of thousands of breasts. Ministers of the Church felt that their wives and children were to be driven from them by the ruthless hands of papal but unsanctified tyranny; they saw a fierce sword suspended over everything dear to them on earth; they must either relinquish their churches or dismiss their wives and children. There were thousands of sacerdotal families, in each one of which a moral and kind priest was the husband and father; no voice with authority, beyond the canon of some petty council or the letter of some intermeddling pope, to whose intrusive declarations no attention was paid, had ever condemned the relations of these loving husbands and wives, parents and children; but the hour of wrath had come, and these dear ones must be torn apart and scattered. If the priest retains his living, his conscience, his cheerless home, and the reproachful looks and words of his banished loved ones, will persecute him till his dying day. If he gives up his priesthood, and follows his companion and their children, want and ecclesiastical curses will pursue him to the grave, or to the limits of the earth. Gregory knew no pity; and he was equally ignorant of Christianity. He revelled in destroying the peace of hosts to serve his empty and wicked ambition, as the lion rejoices in the dying throes of its prey.

These men, in their desperation looked with contempt upon Gregory's papal pretensions, and denounced him as guilty of grievous error. They declared that he contradicted the Saviour, who said that all men could not live continently; and Paul, who commands those who could not live continently to marry. They affirmed that Gregory's decree compelled them to offer violence to the dictates of nature, and required them to live like angels, and that if

the pope persisted in his cruel course they would abandon their churches rather than their marriage, and then he might procure angels to guard their flocks as he was not satisfied with men. "We prefer," said they, "abandoning our bishopries, our abbeys, and our cures; let him keep his benefices."

The Archbishop of Mentz held a synod at Erfurt to persuade his priests to give up their wives; his efforts filled them with anger, and they threatened to depose or kill him. Such was their wrathful and rebellious obstinacy, that he found it convenient to defer the obnoxious measure for a time. The enactment excited the same hatred outside of Germany as in it; in Lombardy, Flanders, England, and France. At Cambray this bitterness burned so fiercely that a man who said that married priests should not celebrate mass or perform any divine office, and that no man ought to aid them in such duties, was cast into the flames and consumed.

But Gregory had unlimited resources in his own vast mind; he had an iron will; he occupied a position invested, in that age, with enormous powers. He had undoubtedly made his calculations beforehand, and he kept by his purpose with the tenacity and unchangeableness of a demon.

He placed the lewd monk and licentious priest, and these were a most numerous and odious class, with the married vicar; he denounced the marriage of a priest as illegal and unchaste from the beginning; and he spoke of it as a pretended marriage; and then he appealed to all moral people in Europe who hated clerical debauchery, to assist him in cleansing the polluted Church.

The enemies of vice everywhere assisted Gregory in his combined work, a labor at once eminently holy and atrociously wicked.

He wrote letters to all princes and bishops, warmly appealing to them for aid in the removal of adulteries from the Church, A labor which even the abandoned could scarcely discourage, for all felt that ecclesiastics and churches should be holy.

Then Gregory gave the laity authority to burn the tithes due to married priests, which, of course were paid in products of the soil. And as clergymen in that age, married and single, were far from popular; and as laymen were quite as selfish then as at present; and as they were perfectly competent to say that they had burned a quantity of tithes which were at home in their garners, the flock of every married priest were peculiarly interested in plundering and destroying him.

Besides Gregory commanded the laity not to hear mass from married priests. And as religion in those days was a list of senseless ceremonies which the people despised, they took advantage of Gregory's hatred to the wedded priests, to show their contempt for religion generally. They polluted the sacraments, and held discussions about them; they baptized children, using the wax of the ears instead of holy chrism; they trampled upon the "body of the Lord consecrated by married priests, and poured out his blood" upon the ground. Gregory nearly raised a general rebellion against the Christian religion in some regions. The people were Gregory's principal instruments in destroying clerical matrimony. By contempt for their services, by keeping

back their tithes, by the severest cruelties the priests were compelled to send away their wives. But it was nearly a century before this iniquity succeeded, a crime of which the the old monk, Matthew of Westminster, properly says: "Some priests who had taken wives Hildebrand removed from their holy office, by A NEW EXAMPLE, and as it seemed to many, an inconsiderate prejudice, in contradiction to the opinions of the ancient fathers." Gregory's efforts were in the highest degree flattering. He triumphed over brokenhearted fathers, weeping mothers, and homeless children; he gained a victory over purity and morality; for truly did these priests tell him that by his compulsory celibacy he was "opening a wide door for all impurity of manners."

Thus Gregory, for the *first time* in the Catholic Church, gave general force to crotchets about celibacy held by some for ages; and the character of a Church law to one of the most infamous and demoralizing customs that ever polluted human minds, withered the hearts of men, or sowed the seeds of immorality in earthly families.

Celibacy in the Council of Trent.

But though the pontiff was successful, somehow marriage had charms for priests as well as other men' and in the discussions of the Council of Trent we find wedlock among priests in full in Bavaria, with many apologists in high positions.

The ambassador of Bavaria made a lengthy and able speech in the council, in denunciation of clerical celibacy; and good Catholic though he was, he uttered the most sweeping charges against the morality of the clergy. He represents the ungodly lives of the priests as sending whole parishes into heresy; he declares the clergy infamous for sensuality; he asserts that not more than three or four in a hundred lived without a female companion, between whom and themselves there was occasionally the bond of a secret or an open marriage; and he affirms that the Catholics of Germany prefer a chaste marriage to an immoral single life. He then demanded the marriage of the priests, without which, he said, it was impossible in that age to reform the clergy. In his discourse he alleged that single life was not commanded by God.

The same view of clerical celibacy was taken by the Emperor Ferdinand, and Charles IX. of France. And among the clergy of the greatest prominence, the Archbishop of Prague, and the Bishop of Five Churches, defended the marriage of the priests. The German clergy presented a very able paper to the council, stating that the Scriptures permit wives to priests; that some of the apostles were married; and that Christ hinted at no separation after he called them; that in the primitive churches in the East and West marriages were free until the time of Pope Calistus; that single life is more to be desired in the clergy, but the frailty of human nature should be considered; that if ever there were cause to permit matrimony to the clergy, it was in that age, that among fifty priests there was scarcely one who was not notoriously immoral; that laymen were disgusted by the beastly behavior of the clergy, and that patrons of churches bestow their benefices upon married men alone. It farther declared that it seemed a great absurdity not to admit

married priests and to tolerate unchaste ones, and if these two classes were removed the churches would be without ministers. Stronger arguments were never used by the most eloquent Protestants against this impious tyranny of Rome than were presented repeatedly in the Council of Trent.

But the advocates of priestly celibacy were skillful, and fully conscious of the vast advantages the system gave the pontiff, notwithstanding its immoral tendencies, they said, with Cardinal Rodolpho Pio di Carpi,

“That priests having house, wife, and children, will not depend on the pope, but their prince, and their love for their children will cast the Church in the shade; that the authority of the Apostolic See will be confined to Rome. Before single life was instituted, the See of Rome received no profit from other nations and cities. Now the See is the patron of many benefices of which the marriage of priests would deprive it.”

Celibacy was defended in the council by arguments drawn from custom; from the inability of the popes to release a priest from the vow of chastity; from extravagant assertions that no church ever allowed priests to marry; and from the falsehood that celibacy was an apostolical tradition. Iniquity triumphed; and impurity, under the name of celibacy, was more firmly established than ever.

The Needless Cruelty of Celibacy.

It is well known that the Greek clergy are married, and always have been. Stanley says: “It is a startling sight to the traveler, after long wanderings in the south of Europe, to find himself in the mountains of Greece or Asia Minor, once more under the roof of a married pastor, and to see the table of the parish priest furnished, as it might be in Protestant England or Switzerland, by the hands of an acknowledged wife. The bishops, indeed, being selected from the monasteries, are single. But the parochial clergy, that is the whole body of the clergy as such, though they cannot marry after their ordination, must be always married before they enter on their office.”

The Council of Florence, which adjourned A.D. 1442, had as a part of its business a proposal to unite the Greek and Latin Churches. The Greek Emperor was present, and a number of his prelates. The points of difference were amply discussed, and a basis of union accepted. But in that proposed union there is not one word about the celibacy of the Greek clergy. In the projected changes there was nothing to touch their wives, or stigmatize their matrimonial relations. And if Greek priests could enter the Catholic Church, and fill the same positions without separation from their wives, why compel German priests to drive away their wives?

The Maronites.

This people occupy the mountains of Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon; they have been united to the Pope of Rome, rather than to his Church, since the Latins invaded Palestine. They joined the pontiff on condition that they should change none of their ancient rites, customs and opinions. And at this day

there is hardly anything Latin among them, except their veneration for the pope. But at Rome they are good Catholics, and have been held as among the most faithful adherents of Romanism for centuries. And yet all their CLERGY ARE MARRIED. In thinking of the Maronite married priests, let us look at the ninth canon of the twenty-fourth session of the Council of Trent:

“If any man shall say that clergymen appointed in holy orders, or regulars who have solemnly professed chastity, can contract marriage, and that the contract is valid, no matter what yow or ecclesiastical law opposes, and that the opposite is no other thing than the condemnation of matrimony; and that all could marry, who do not realize that they have the gift of chastity, although they may have vowed to lead a single life; let him be accursed; since God does not deny that gift to those seeking it, nor suffer that we should be tempted beyond that which we are able (to bear).”

Here a curse is pronounced upon all who say that priests or monks can contract matrimony, and yet the Church of Rome says to her own Maronite priests, you can contract marriage, and while I curse all other priests, I will bless you. Surely this is the height of inconsistency, and of cruelty. The celibacy of the clergy is no divine doctrine in the view of the Papal Church; she could take thousands of Greek priests without it and commit no sin: she can keep all the married Maronite priests without semblance of iniquity; celibacy, then, with her, is really, as Du Pin says, “A matter *purely of discipline, which may change according to the times*,” which has sprung up from the married ministry of the early churches slowly, until, in the eleventh century, Gregory VII. gave marriage a fatal wound among the clergy, and the Council of Trent completed his work. But as celibacy is a mere matter of discipline, it is a piece of needless and atrocious cruelty to separate priests and their wives, or to prohibit a union for which God has made preparation in all hearts.

Continued in [XVII. Catholic Justification](#)

All chapters of The Papal System by William Cathcart

- [I. The Ancient British Church](#)
- [II. The Ancient Irish Church](#)
- [III. The Ancient Scottish Church](#)
- [IV. Councils For Seven Centuries Repudiate Papal Jurisdiction](#)
- [V. Christendom at the Beginning of the Seventh Century](#)
- [VI. Steps to Papal Sovereignty Over The Churches – Part 1](#)
- [VI. Steps to Papal Sovereignty Over The Churches – Part 2](#)
- [VII. The Pope Claims to be Lord of Kings and Nations – Part 1](#)
- [VII. The Pope Claims to be Lord of Kings and Nations – Part 2. Pope Innocent III Abolishes the Magna Carta](#)
- [VII. The Pope Claims to be Lord of Kings and Nations – Part 3. The Excommunication of Queen Elizabeth](#)
- [VIII. The Council of Trent](#)
- [IX. Baptism](#)

- [X. Confirmation](#)
- [XI. The Lord's Supper, The Eucharist, The Mass](#)
- [XII. The Confessional](#)
- [XIII. Extreme Unction](#)
- [XIV. The Sacrament of Orders](#)
- [XV. Marriage](#)
- [XVI. The Celibacy of the Clergy](#)

- [XVII. Catholic Justification](#)
- [XVIII. Purgatory](#)
- [XIX. Indulgences](#)
- [XX. The Worship of Relics](#)
- [XXI. Miracles](#)
- [XXII. The Invocation and Worship of Saints and Angels](#)
- [XXIII. The Worship of the Virgin Mary](#)
- [XXIV. The Worship of Images](#)
- [XXV. Papal Infallibility And The Council of 1870](#)
- [XXVI. The Freedom of the Press](#)
- [XXVII. Intention in the Priest Necessary](#)
- [XXVIII. Secret Societies](#)
- [XXX. The Catholic Church and Public Education](#)
- [XXXI. Sins Taken Away By Gifts And Favors](#)
- [XXXII. No Salvation for Protestants](#)
- [XXXIII. The Mass in Latin](#)
- [XXXIV. The Sincerity of Catholic Priests](#)
- [XXXV. Hymns, And Those Who Composed Them](#)
- [XXXVI. Roman Catholics Who Were Worthy Of All Honor](#)
- [XXXVII. The Inquisition](#)
- [XXXVIII. The Scriptures](#)
- [XXXIX. The Four Great Founders of Monkish Institutions](#)
- [XL. The Jesuits](#)
- [XLI. Conclusion](#)