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## Chapter I

### THE HELL-ETHIC AND MODERN PSYCHOLOGY

It is not long since we were all laughing at a crazy film titled "Hellzapoppin." Probably the most sedate amongst us really enjoyed the overture—or ought we to call it the Sacred Prelude?—giving us an up-to-date picture of the hectic life in the underworld. My mind, when I saw it, recalled a little old 14th-century church in a rural part of England where one can still see on the wall, in a remarkable state of preservation, an immense fresco of life on the earth and beneath it which pious hands had painted on it nearly 600 years ago; and believe me, Hollywood might have taken the lower part of the fresco as the model for the prelude to "Hellzapoppin." But if you had smiled at the picture in the 14th Century, as we do today, you would have been dispatched to your destination prematurely.

No other equal stretch of human history has seen such revolutionary changes as the last 600 years. From the cross-bow to the machine-gun and the aerial torpedo: from the galleon to the latest battleship with 16-inch guns: from daubs on the wall, lit by tallow-candles, to superb talking pictures in technicolor: from villages to cities of 8,000,000 folk with 50-story buildings: from crabbed manuscripts to princely free libraries and news flashed from continent to continent in the time it takes you to cross a street. . . . But the richest and most powerful Church in America still gathers folk, in dazzling New York or nerve-racking Chicago or aristocratic Washington, to hear the preacher tell about the legions of devils that hunger for their souls and the vast lakes of fire underground into which they may slip at any moment.

Come, Mr. McCabe, some of you will say, it is nearly half a century since you left the Church of Rome and in that swift-moving half-century it has doubtless changed considerably. If you think so, ask a child from a Catholic school, any school, whether or no they still teach it that it walks through life with an invisible "guardian angel" on its right side and an invisible devil with a quite peculiar rage to lead it astray on the other: whether they do not teach it, as a living dogma of its religion, that the boy of eight who has called another by one of the lurid names they so easily pick up, or the pretty golden-haired girl of eight who has permitted one of those little liberties that children do, will not, if killed in a street-accident on the way home, go to a hell of eternal fire and torturing devils. Open a Catholic hymn-book and see how these Catholic folk with whom you drink beer and crack jokes still sing on Sundays—and very lustily—how "hell is raging for my soul" and dab themselves with holy water to keep the devils away. Read any book you like about Catholic doctrine today, and you will find that the dogma of eternal torment, to which all over the age of seven are liable, is as binding as it was in days of the

Council of Trent or is in any chapel in Kentucky or Georgia, and that the belief in devils—swarms of them—is as fresh and child-like as it was in ancient Babylon in the days of Hammurabi 4,000 years ago.

Naturally a preacher in one of those city-churches to which the artists and literary men, who lend their names to the Church, go, knows which dogmas to emphasize and which to keep in the shadow, but let him or one of his artistic followers put in print that Rome has abandoned the doctrines of hell and out he will go on his neck. During my final years in the Church, in the last decade of the last century, we took great pride in the fact that one fairly well known British scientist, Prof. St. George Mivart, was "one of us." When I quit the Church he sought me and, for his own intellectual credit, he said, told me how he despised the most fundamental dogmas and promised me that he would speak out. He opened with an article in which he rejected the dogma of hell. And he was at once excommunicated and was driven to death by the fury of the Black International that erupted; though my professor of theology, Father D. Fleming, one of the most learned priests in London, and my professor of philosophy, Msgr. (later Cardinal) Mercier, had told me and him that they agreed with him.

If any one of those few professors of science who today call themselves Catholics dared similarly to repudiate the belief in an eternal hell in a published writing he would have the same experience. I have just been reading an American Catholic work, **A Call to Catholic Action**, in which a score of priests who are at the head of the modern movement in the Church give two volumes of up-to-date advice to the laity, especially to those who are urging their faith upon the notice of America. What is their bugle-call? Or what is the fight to which they call the laity? They tell us that it is primarily "a fight against Satan, the world, and the flesh." That takes you back inexorably to the drowsy atmosphere of that little 14th-century church in the heart of rural Britain. Nay, if you know social history, it takes you back to the dark-skinned curly-locked folk in long woolen tunics who confessed their sins to the priests and sought to dodge the innumerable devils in the courtyard round the pyramid-temple of Marduk in ancient Babylon.

I wish a few folk at Hollywood would read some of the essays or sermons in this **Call to Catholic Action**. They are cursing—and half America curses with them—the servility which they have to show to a Catholic censor: a gentleman who acts in the interest of his Church but assures them that it is only because "the public does not really want this kind of thing, you know." Yet here are the leaders of Catholic Action warning their followers that the American movies are the chief agency of the devil. Here is a celibate (we hope) monk with the sound American name of Father Schmiedeler who describes what a hell city life is in America. It appears that the good monk thinks that life in small towns and villages is more virtuous. . . . Anyhow here is his description of the city:

As matters stand at present even the most shielded, the best of homes, can hardly expect to escape the contaminating tinge even into the innermost recesses of the family sanctuary,

influence of the moral contagion that surrounds them. By means of the press and radio, the movie-hall and the dance-hall, the lecture-room, and platform, our communities are being infested with a poison of immorality that is gradually penetra-

Of all these devices of Satan the movies, he says, are "the worst offenders," and there has been "a growing stench for the past several decades" from them. The monk seems to have been more fortunate in his choice of pictures than I have been, for it is a very long time since I saw films that correspond to his description of, presumably, what he saw.

This particular campaign of the Black International inspires many reflections, and I will enlarge on two of them in this chapter. The first is that many will ask me whether the clergy and spinsters of other Churches are not in this respect as bad as the clergy-spinsters of the Church of Rome. On the face of it, yes, and we must not forget this. But there are material differences. The Baptists claim to number 8,000,000, the Catholics 20,000,000. The Baptists are thickest in Texas, Georgia, North and South Carolina, Alabama, and Virginia: the Catholics in New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Illinois, and New Jersey, half the total body being in these five states. Baptists may bully authorities in Dayton but not in Boston, Chicago, New York, Detroit, Washington, Baltimore, and San Francisco.

And this broad difference in psychology between Fundamentalist and Catholic hellism, as we may call it, entails a very considerable difference between the rival clerical bodies. Skepticism amongst preachers of hell in Georgia and Alabama is uncommon, but it is so widespread in the Papist Black International that one may seriously doubt if one preacher in three really believes in hell and the devil or honestly shudders at the thought of the world and the flesh. Certainly the overwhelming majority of the Fundamentalist preachers of hell believe that the New Testament is the Word of God, and the Gospels and Paul very clearly teach the dogma of eternal punishment. The Roman clergy on the other hand, no matter what proportion of them you regard as sincere, have mainly a professional interest in the belief. It is not only the chief source of their power over the ignorant but one of the principal sources of their vast profit.

It puzzles folk when I say that relatively few Catholics fear hell, but if you reflect on the general geniality, if not gaiety, of a Catholic district or country (Eire, etc.) you realize that this must be true. The Catholic system is based upon an escapist psychology. Like the priests of ancient Egypt, who taught the people that the journey to the garden of Osiris after death was beset by monstrous perils and hordes of demons but they could sell you charms for post-mortem use which defeated the devils, Catholic priests neutralize the effect which their grim doctrine ought to have upon the emotions by assuring the people that they have the power to save even the most hardened sinner from the penalty. Most Egyptologists believe that the common folk of Egypt—ninety-ninths of the nation—were not promised immortality, which had hitherto been reserved for kings and nobles, until about B. C. 1400. No one professes to find any change in the light morals of the Egyptian workers and middle class when this idea that they had

a risky chance of an eternal bliss was extended to them, and the late Prof. Breasted used to say this was because the post-mortem risk was practically abolished by the priests, through their sale of charms and spells, in the same breath in which they gave the people the glorious promise of immortality, of which they do not seem to have taken any serious notice.

It is much the same in Catholic theology. For a hundred years or more the first Christian communities were very solemn little groups of folk who really thought a lot about sin and hell. Then the Roman Popes, particularly the blackguardly Papal adventurer "St." Callistus I (207-22), discovered that they could absolve from any sin of any size or hue if you confessed it to a priest, and Roman Christian life—I am quoting one of them—became more picturesque and highly colored. Catholic censors would certainly not permit Hollywood to screen it. The faithful did not directly pay for absolution, but there was rich indirect payment in the fact that, as we positively know, the membership of the Church rapidly increased threefold or more, and there were large numbers of light-living but wealthy Roman ladies amongst the converts.

Yet, since death does not always wait for you to summon a priest to absolve you, hell remained rather a tough proposition in the mind of many, and was a stumbling block to the cultured; and, above all, it was not as profitable as one could wish. The priests therefore took up a theory of a few rationalizing theologians: the theory of purgatory. These theologians, who were heretics while they lived, felt that there must be two furnaces in the cosmic basement: one for the more terrible sinners, such as the man who thrashed a priest he found with his wife or the man who died without asking the priest's ministrations, and one for lighter offenders and those who had substantially liquidated the debt by confession. One was eternal and in the other you burned only for a time. How could you be sure of a ticket for Furnace No. 2 instead of No. 1? Practically every Catholic believes that he is booked at least for this. Here the clergy opened a vein of gold in the hard rock of dogma. Absolution got you clear of "the fire that is never extinguished," and they invented a dozen ways of evading or very considerably reducing your stay in "the flames of Purgatory." And nearly all of them—indulgences, alms, relics, pilgrimages, etc.—cost money.

That is the big difference between the Catholic hell-scheme and the Protestant. I have nothing to do here with the question whether one is more reasonable, or less nauseous, than the other. I am concerned only with the psychological question of influence on behavior and with the enormous power which the Catholic scheme gives to the clergy. The latter point is obvious. One of the many features—besides chronic war, pestilence, poor and monotonous food for nine-tenths of the people, ruthless exploitation by the nobles, etc.—which made life in the Age of Faith so "jolly," as the late G. K. Chesterton used to say, was that now and again, when a king refused to heed the crack of the ecclesiastical whip, the Pope would put an interdict on the kingdom. Living under Nazi or Jap invaders today is pleasant in comparison. The whole scheme of salvation was suspended. The Pope locked up the keys of



purgatory as well as heaven in his safe, leaving the gates of hell wide open.

However, we are here more interested in the psychological aspect. Those finer-natured non-Catholic writers who give so much pleasure to the clergy explain Catholic life, in the Middle Ages or today, on Catholic theory. It **must** have been happy and virtuous. It is so much easier, as well as more conducive to good will, to explain life in that way. Unfortunately I, being cursed with a Materialist, and Atheist creed, have to make laborious research into facts and tell the truth; which is that life in the Middle Ages was generally foul, is generally foul in Catholic countries today, and in the Catholic section of American life is painfully rich in criminals.

The working of the hell-ethic explains this. Modern psychology is precisely a study of conduct or behavior and in one branch it examines the motive as shaping forces of conduct. They are all lodged in the organism from without. You must, it is true, make some allowance for hereditary bodily equipment. Some females have richer glands of a certain kind in their ovaries and pituitaries. just as they may have better stomachs or stronger hearts than others, and these are destined by nature to be our scarlet sinners. The Vestal Virgin type, on the other hand. . . . But I will leave that to a later chapter. The point is that Catholic conduct is shaped by environmental influences just like any other, and this persistent influence of the hell-and-devil motif from infancy onward, in school and church and Catholic literature, is morbid. The hell-ethic never did produce nice types of character. "Saints" are not people who were so very, very good because they feared hell. And nowadays it is worse education than ever. The boy or girl has been taught for years to take it mighty seriously, and then he or she goes to see "Hellzapoppin" and hears nine-tenths of the audience roar with laughter. I am not very familiar with jail-circles, though I have corresponded with criminals in San Quentin, but I believe that the large Catholic population in Sing Sing or Joliet is not conspicuously depressed by thought of hell and the devil.

Let no one be tempted to conclude from all this that the Catholic Church today does not really require the same belief in hell and the devil as a colored preacher in Georgia does. Make no mistake about it. The Church insists on it as an Article of Faith—a doctrine automatically endorsed by every man who calls himself a Catholic—as it did in the days of Torquemada. Look up the article on it in the most authoritative exposition of Catholic teaching, the **Catholic Encyclopedia**. The article "Hell" is written by a Dutch Jesuit—did no American priest care to have the honor?—and is meticulously accurate.

Hell as a place of eternal torment is, he says, a fundamental Catholic doctrine. It is "a definite place, but where it is we do not know." The learned professor agrees with "theologians generally" that it is "really within the earth." This preposterous rubbish was written and printed in the most costly enterprise of the American Church in the year 1910 when physicists had come to fairly definite conclusions about the colossal concentration of metal in the center of the earth. However, I hasten to add, in case you are thinking of becoming a Catholic, that the Church does not dogmatically say where hell is, merely that it is a place, not a state or a figure of speech. So far, says the Jesuit in this

princely publication of the American Church, the doctrine of hell, leaving out for the moment the question of its eternity and apart, of course, from these disreputable Atheists, "has never yet [1910] met any opposition worthy of mention." Yes, I assure you I cleaned my glasses specially to read it again. Dean Farrer, the greatest preacher of the Church of England, denied it in the pulpit of St. Paul's Cathedral in 1878, and the rejection has spread so far in his Church and the sister Church in America that at the Lambert Conference of 1930 the combined British and American bishops virtually cut it out of the catechism. We will say nothing about the Unitarians, Congregationalists, and a large part of the Methodists. Not worth mentioning—by a Catholic writing for Catholics.

This dogma, that men are punished in some place after death, can, says our authoritative guide, "be demonstrated by the light of pure reason." You will have to read the lengthy proofs yourself. I am a man of delicate stomach. That the punishment is eternal is an obligatory dogma, but this also can be defended by pure reason, or by Catholic logic, which is the only perfect logic in the modern world. But that the instrument of torture is material fire is not an Article of Faith. It is merely the teaching of "the greater number of theologians." It is also the conviction of the writer of the article, and since he was selected by the editor of the work as more authoritative than any American priest could be, it is the version of Catholic doctrine recommended to America by this most costly enterprise of the hierarchy. The great and so modern Thomas Aquinas showed long ago, the Jesuit reminds us, that the Catholic need not feel any difficulty at all about how a material fire can burn pure (disembodied) spirits. With God all things are possible. . . . No, I am not being flippant. That is the argument. But the Church, you may be relieved to know, has never dogmatically declared that the form of torture is fire. Those choice bits of the missionary preacher on hell are just illustrations of what "the greater numbers of theologians" teach.

I still remember one such gem; and it is not a reminiscence of boyhood but part of an address to the monks of my monastery—I was then about 26 and a professor—delivered with great solemnity by the learned Fr. David Fleming who, he later let me know, did not believe in hell. The burning, he said, was so intense that if there were a ladder of infinite length reaching up from the pit and every rung was a razor but there was a cupfull of water at the top the damned would jostle each other in their eagerness to mount it. The Catholic is not compelled to believe in the fire but "he is compelled to believe that these disembodied souls or "pure spirits" are punished for all eternity by some variety of "sensory torture" (*paena sensus*). So if you prefer to think of a combination of intense thirst, toothache, sciatica, racks, thumbscrews, etc., instead of fire, go to it. The Chinese have nothing on these Roman interpreters of what they call "God's holy purposes." Historians give as the choicest piece of cruelty in one of the most cruel periods of civilized history—in Papal Italy during the "best" part of the later Middle Ages—that two nobles invented a system of torture which crowded the maximum possible of pain in forty days (in honor of Lent) without killing the patient. Only forty days! The theologian spins it out to eternity.

## Chapter II

### PRIMITIVE SUPERSTITION ABOUT SEX

I am devoting a later book in this series to a candid examination of what the Catholic, under priestly hypnotism, calls "our Holy Faith" and believes to be so unique and beautiful a body of doctrine that his Church is fully entitled to boast of being "intolerant" and to claim the right to burn apostates. I had, however, to glance at this exquisite specimen of the Holy Faith as a basis for the present booklet. Let me complete it by glancing at another doctrine, and we will better understand the Church's attitude to the world.

The escape from this unpleasant region in the centre of the globe is technically called "salvation" and the failure to escape it "damnation"; and from the respect with which the latter word is always breathed by your neighbors you will gather how the horrid possibility weighs upon the mind of the race. Now it is a very trite expression of Catholic literature that the Church is "the Ark of Salvation"—an allusion, of course, to the ancient Sumerian folk-story of the Ut-Napishtim and the Deluge—and the question is often discussed whether Catholics hold that "outside the Church there is no salvation." I am not going to be dragged aside on every page to discuss the beauty or, as you prefer, the puerility of these doctrines. We are concerned here with the power they give to the Black International and their influence in the general Catholic attitude.

In the *Calvert Handbook* which, you will remember, is sponsored by Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler and other high academic authorities, this is the theme of the first article, and it is one of the most dishonest of the bunch. The Church, it insists, certainly does not say that outside of it there is no salvation. In proof of this the writer quotes the muddle-headed Pius IX (no reference given, but clearly over 70 years ago) saying solemnly:

We must all hold as certain that ignorance of the true religion when it is invincible, excuses from all fault in the sight of the Lord.

Marvelous. In plain English, if any person never heard of the Catholic Church or its teaching the Lord will not damn him for not being a Catholic. The writer's ingenious twist of this into a statement that it covers Protestants who know the Church well and loathe it need not be examined. Turn to the more authoritative *Catholic Encyclopedia*, and you will find that the spokesman selected to tell America what the Church really holds, not an anonymous journalist but the Rev. Prof. Pohle (article "Toleration"), not only admits that it is sound Catholic doctrine that "outside the Church there is no salvation" but proves the justice of it with all the rigor of ideal Catholic logic. Here I had better give the full passage:

If by conceding a convenient right of option or a falsely understood freedom of faith she [the Church] were to leave everyone at liberty to accept or reject her dogmas, her constitution, and her sacraments, as the existing differences of religions compel the modern State to do, she would not only fail in her divine mission but would end her life in voluntary suicide. As the true God can tolerate no strange gods, the true Church of Christ can tolerate no strange Churches beside herself. . . . A strictly logical consequence of this incontestably fundamental idea is the ecclesiastical dogma, that outside the Church there is no salvation . . . this proposition is necessarily and indissolubly connected with the above-mentioned principle of the exclusive legitimacy of truth and with the whole ethical commandment of love for the truth (XIV, 766).

Then are all the rest of the world apart from the 180,000,000 Catholics damned? Bless you, the Church does not say anything so horrid; he adds, you see, the Church does not damn anybody. That is God's business. How is that for logic?

It is this kind of logic that gives the Black International all its arrogance and intolerance and the faithful their weird belief that their faith is uniquely holy and beautiful. It is this that explains their melodramatic defiance of the modern world. I am, you will remember, in this second series of booklets explaining that the Church of Rome is, contrary to what its apologists commonly say in America, of such a nature that it inevitably grasped at the invitation to ally itself with Germany, Italy, and Japan. Some very ingenious pages, in the style of your literary oracles, could be written on the psychological affinity of the Black International and the Axis. Men who, in the name of the Almighty, preach weekly that he and they calmly contemplate about a million mortals a week passing into the eternal fires (or other torments) would not worry as much as the rest of us if their high aims had to be attained by a little temporary suffering like that of the British in Singapore or the Poles in Warsaw. However I am not a literary man and prefer to tell the truth, which is that heaven knows how few of the priests really believe in hell.

And in this it defies the modern world as flatly as it defies modern thought and sentiment with its crude medieval dogmas. It does not talk much about the devil except in the Catholic school and church. Outsiders are apt to be so rude as to laugh. But the world and the flesh! My word, we are a wicked lot. Some of the sermons in that *Call to Catholic Action* from which I quoted make me feel quite uncomfortable. I roam in thought over this metropolis of 8,000,000 folk which I know pretty intimately, since I have lived and wandered in all sorts of odd corners of it for 60 years, and I feel that I must be more myopic than I thought. I have not seen a drunken man or a fight (such as you see daily in Catholic Eire) for years and have very rarely seen any approach to the indecency that was a joke on the streets in the Ages of Faith.

To be brief and practical, behind all this sulphuretted hydrogen emitted by the clergy is their professional preoccupation with sex. We shall see presently why I say "professional" and how incongruous it is in a body of religious ministers which is, taking one country with another, the most "immoral" in the world. Let us

first consider it in itself: which is not as easy as at first sight you might imagine.

The priests exhort their followers to marry early and beget as many children as they possibly can. No holds barred. In America they have to say this holds good even if you (if not a Catholic) got your license from a civic official instead of a priest. In Scotland it applies if two young folk have married without priest or registrar. They dare not say in America that it does not apply if men or women were divorced and married again. What if it was a Reno divorce? A Yucatan divorce? The dividing line wavers and grows thin. Yet if you are the wrong side of that line you get poured upon you the dregs of the moralist's dictionary. He thinks public corruption regrettable and the exploitation of the helpless poor just too bad; but a sex-act on the wrong side of the line is foul, obscene, swinish, loathsome, revolting, etc., etc. The novelist who speaks lightly of it has a mind like a sewer, a cesspool, or a sty. Those pictures in which you see the dainty, fascinating, glamorous ladies of Hollywood, who seem to bring a current of fresh air into your jaded mind once or twice a week, really (Father Schmiedeler assures you) exhale a "growing stench."

And it is not a question of a snare subtly set here and there by the invisible devils. Modern American literature and art are one comprehensive conspiracy to bring upon a poor Catholic girl the fate that is worse than death. In this *Call to Catholic Action* one writer who is styled "His Excellency the Most Rev. Joseph Schrembs"—he must be very important but I do not know why—says apropos of films, that the Church found itself "confronted with a gigantic industry that was disseminating the doctrines of pagan morality." He hints that he and others marshalled the pure maids of his Church in a Legion of Decency and they used their box-office power to change all that, but on another page of the same book Fr. Schmiedeler says that the "stench" increases year by year. Another priest similarly describes practically the whole of American fiction.

By the way, I had overlooked this precious piece of Catholic literature when (in No. 13) I described the cultural poverty of the Church in America. The Jesuit Daly here admits and explains it. He says that "the cultured world is not a fertile ground for Catholic seed," and the reason is "its immorality." That is not ingenious. It's tripe. Whatever you think of the morals of cultured folk the reason why Catholicism, with its hell and devils, stinks in their nostrils is because they are cultured. However, the next writer in this important Catholic book relieves the gloom. There has been a great Catholic literary revival in the last ten years. As its greatest writers he names C. Dawson, C. Hollis, Fr. Darcy, Fr. R. Knox, K. Adam, J. Maritain, and Sigrid Undset! Apparently he still could not find one, even on his liberal scale, in America. He had to sweep all Europe to get these seven second- or third-raters together.

What occurs to one at once on reading these interminable Catholic dirges is that the Church does really seem to be up against the world. If American art and literature are so demoralizing although this wealthy and powerful clerical organization has been fighting them for more than ten years, what would they be if

there had not been this check on them? Do they or do they not reflect American life and sentiment? But let us be serious. Artists give America what it wants—what the overwhelming majority of people want. Suspend your League of Decency and Holy Family and all the other censorships for five years and see how the public like a freer art and literature.

In other words, it is a tyranny of a small minority, for ever the great majority of Catholics would still, if they were not bullied, flock to the cinema if it were just left to ordinary police-regulation and the recognized civil law. And it is self-interested tyranny. As I write, Laval is announced to have taken over power in France from the senile Petain, the man who pledged his honor that he would never surrender, and he gathers a group of traitors to France about him. The Press froths with indignation and vituperation of Laval in particular. But no paper ever mentions that Laval is a fanatical supporter of the Church and the whole malodorous group of traitors are Catholics. None of our foreign correspondents notices that the Black International, which is so portentously serious about the stretch of leg an actress may show on the screen, has from the start discreetly protected and is even very silent about this poisonous swamp of corruption and real foulness in France. It would not pay the Church to attack a foulness that brings suffering upon tens of millions and seems to all free men diabolical; but it does pay to attack leg-shows and strip-teasers.

However, I am always for the kindly and charitable view when it is possible, so let us suppose that the whole Black International in America is profoundly sincere when it says that it finds the sight of that charming little actress — — in her undies on the screen a far more terrible thing than the treachery of Vichy, the shooting of "hostages," or the systematic raping of women everywhere by Japanese soldiers and officers. Surely it would follow only that the clergy must have a moral standard that defies modern civilization. You may even cut out the comparison and regard in itself this professed horror of bare legs and jokes about sex. It is, as the Catholic language about the world and the flesh implies, a defiance of our age, an insult alike to our intelligence and our social idealism. It is, when it is sincere, just as much an outcome of ignorance as is a child's fear of a dragon-fly or an old colored woman's fear of "haunts."

There are two main roots of the anti-sex attitude, and both thrive only on ignorance. The Catholic is, like the Protestant, bound to appeal to the bible, but the modern mind wants to know how it got into the bible. It is a fundamental idea of the Pauline Epistles rather than the Gospels. Indeed, it is, comparatively to other moral ideas, so infrequently stressed in the Gospels that in recent years certain Christian ministers have publicly claimed that Jesus taught no obligation of chastity. That is, in the mouth of one who sees a biographical value in the Gospels, an exaggeration. In fact if we regard Jesus as an Essenian monk who became convinced that the end of the world was near and went about warning folk, it is inevitable that he should include chastity among the major virtues, because the Essenians had, and they had had the sentiment for more than a century before the beginning of the present era, so great an aversion to sex that they never married.

In any case this dark view of sex was widely spread in the ancient world before it appeared in the early Christian documents. Many of my readers will know that I have in earlier works (*History of Morals*, etc.) made extensive research into the development of the feeling and shown that, as is not disputed, it was embodied in religions in ancient Egypt (Serapeans, Isisites, etc.), Syria and Judaea (Essenians, Therapeuts), Babylonia (Esmun, Ishtar), Persia (Zarathustra), Asia Minor (Diana of Ephesus), and Greece (Pythagoras, Plato, etc.) centuries before the beginning of the Christian Era. This vast region had earlier been the great area of the cult of the Mother-Earth goddess which was intensely phallic and conducive to what the puritan calls orgies of vice. Upon this phallic cult broke a religion which represented God as the creator of light, spirit, and purity (or cleanliness) and therefore ascribed darkness, matter (the flesh), and the sexual life to a great evil and tempter of men. As far as we know at present this antithesis of creative God and creative devil of spirit and flesh, first appeared amongst the Persian and cognate tribes on the hills overlooking Mesopotamia, and the influence of this Zoroastrian religion on the whole area (Egypt, Judaea, Greece, etc.) when the Persians conquered it is not disputed.

We need not, therefore, go further back and ask what superstitions of life below the level of civilization—for instance, the idea, not uncommon at this level, that there is something “unclean” as taboo about a woman on account of her menstruation, etc.—were gathered up in the Persian theory. It is enough that the entire world of theologians, philosophers and moralists as well as ordinary folks now rejects this notion that an evil spirit created the flesh. And we certainly need not examine the way in which the early Fathers, maintaining against the Persian heretics that God had created all things, interpreted an old Babylonian story which the Jews had inserted in Genesis to mean that God had made even the flesh pure (in some mysterious sense) and put a curse on sex only when “man ate the forbidden fruit!”

So the chief reason why Jesus and Paul, like so many philosophers (Pythagoreans, Stoics of the religious wing, Platonists, etc.) and theologians (Essenian, Serapean, Mithranist, Manichaen, etc.) of the time came to frown upon sex, as a necessary evil from which the superior person would shrink, is quite worthless. The second reason, which is rather a pretext invented by modern theologians and moralists, to cover the weakness of the original source is just as worthless. It is the socio-historical argument that sexual license has led, through enervation, to the fall of great civilizations in the past and therefore a religion which checks and combats “vice” is a most valuable auxiliary of the State. I have elsewhere shown that this is entirely false. No responsible modern historian tracing the fall of Egypt, Babylon, Athens, or Rome gives any color to that rhetorical claim. Rome, for instance, was much more “virtuous” in the 4th Century, just before its fall, than in the last century of the old era, when it was entering upon its greatest phase.

The rottenness of these roots of the old anti-sex attitude is now so widely recognized that the non-Christian moralists of the 19th Century, who dreaded the argument of the apologist that they could not sustain the virtue of chastity, fell back upon “the moral

sense" or a man's intuition of natural law. Many moralists are still in this stage, and "the common moral sense of mankind" is a pleasant mouthful for the political orator and the editorial writer. Modern psychology is a science with many conflicting schools but in none of them is a "moral sense" included in our mental equipment, and all but a few lingering mystics reject the very idea of intuition. All men's ideas and attitudes are built-in, and most professors of the science of ethics today explain moral ideas on these lines. The only moral law is a law or ideal of conduct based upon the requirements of social welfare and progress, and therefore most of the things which the Catholic preacher denounces as supremely immoral do not come under the moral law at all.

I have had here to confine myself to two or three paragraphs on a vast subject on which I have written volumes, but it will give a sufficient idea of the ground on which we stand when we say that this Catholic rhetoric about the world and the flesh is an appeal to the ignorant, an insolent libel, a chorus of dervishes which might be amusing if political interests did not give them so much power. Greater freedom in thinking and speaking about sex means a new strength, not a new weakness. We have done with the amiable hypocrisies of our predecessors, whose shows blushed one night over the fate that is worse than death and the tragedy of Our Nell and the next night revelled in exhibitions that the modern police would not permit.

The very fact that the new attitude is so general—that in the words of these preachers (which I quoted), the contamination is universal—shows that most men and women, who in earlier generations transgressed a law which they recognized, now consciously perceive that there is no such law. The general public know nothing, of course, of the wide research and close reasoning on which the new ethic is based; just as the majority of church-folk know nothing of the logic and reasoning by which priests make ethical and theological mountains out of the Gospel molehills. But in the freer atmosphere they use their common sense on the hell-and-devil view of human nature, and large numbers of them now read a literature which confirms their common-sense conclusions. Theologians assailing statesmen with appeals to suppress this literature are in exactly the same position as the medieval monks who forced rulers to burn heretics. If it were not for the political power which the masses of their more ignorant followers afford them, we should merely have to expose their ignorance and the real dynamo of their activity.



## Chapter III

## SAINTS AND OTHER HOLY MEN

I have in various works expressed the opinion that a time will come when the Black International will abandon their campaign against the world of the flesh and discover that their medieval Church gave the world a splendid lead in what D'Annunzio called a "magnificent sensuality" and glorification of the flesh. It would be but one more revolution in the sacristy. Less than 100 years ago—let us say in 1850—the Black International in every Catholic country thundered against democracy. Even in America they had not yet learned that Paine, Franklin, Jefferson, and Adams had been suckled at the spiritual breasts of Thomas Aquinas. They were, as in England, completely indifferent to social questions. But wherever they had power, from Peru to Italy, and the political issue was stormily debated, they were intimately leagued with the brutal forces which had for the second (and, as they thought, last) time drowned the democrats in their own blood. By the end of the century they were all democrats, and in America they made the remarkable discovery, of which priests in other countries do not yet seem to have heard, that the Church itself had mothered the democratic ideal. Today, in all Catholic countries, they are again solidly anti-democratic. Tomorrow . . .

If, as we are all convinced, Russia wins this titanic struggle and is not defrauded by Britain and America of the legitimate fruit of victory, the chief voice in the settlement of Europe, the Church of Rome may find itself compelled to make some remarkable adjustments in its struggle to retain its wealth and power. At the moment it hopes, as I have explained in earlier numbers, to maintain its position, the improved position as compared with what it was from 1920 to 1930, even if the Axis-Vatican combination is defeated. The whole weight of the Church will be thrown into the demand that President Roosevelt shall have a decisive voice in the post-war settlement, and the "Catholic point of view," which Washington is now so prone to consult, will be that, as religious influence offers the best security against a recurrence of lawlessness the Church shall be strengthened in its new position in Catholic countries (including France and Belgium) and shall have new rights, in the name of religious freedom, in Germany and Russia. You may think that a piece of incredible insolence after the share that the Vatican has had in protecting the designs of the Axis, but look out for it.

If, on the other hand, the realistic Russian spirit is consulted in the settlement, and France, Belgium, Spain, Italy, Hungary, etc., are allowed to deal with their traitors and Churches, the Black International will confront the gravest crisis in its history. It has, in its struggle for survival, changed many times in the last 50 years, but only superficially or by purely local adaptations to dif-

ferent conditions. While from 1900 to 1914 the American bishops and priests were, as part of their forward movement, boisterously assuring the public that the Church was broad-minded and tolerant and a good neighbor to other Churches, Rome itself three times (as I told) officially published, in Latin, its medieval Canon Law with all its superbly intolerant and truculent claims. When, from 1920 to 1940, these American priests and bishops were putting forward their extraordinary proofs of the Church's affinity with the modern ideals of freedom and democracy the Vatican was working on the anti-democratic line which culminated in its alliance with the Axis powers. The Church had not changed a single principle. It still boasted that, while all other Churches shed old dogmas and gave new liberties, it was still Immutabile Rome.

That it must sooner or later change or perish will be doubted only by a man who despairs of the issue of the present conflict and imagines that the world may be returning to a new Dark Age, but it will seem to many quixotic to suggest that it might drop its furious campaign against the world, the flesh, and the devil. We must remember that the first dogmas to be jettisoned by a Church in time of danger are those which most affront the moral sentiment, and it is humorous to reflect that while the doctrine of hell did not disturb the minds of even educated persons during the long ages of faith it is highly repugnant in this age which the preachers describe as almost devoid of moral sense. Less than 100 years ago that doctrine was just as vital in the teaching of the Church of England and its American offshoot as it now is in the Church of Rome. Today it is at the most optional and was very clearly recommended for rejection at the Lambeth Conference; and there was no exodus from the Church. And if it be said that it is a long step from rejecting belief in hell and the devil to rejecting the sexual taboo, consider what happened at the Conference of the American Protestant Episcopal Church in 1922, the speeches at which are published in a volume with the title *The Influence of the Church on Modern Problems*.

The problem set for the first sitting was: "What are our young people seeking in their apparent revolt from the moral standards of an earlier day?" The word "apparent" may seem very ecclesiastical, though the first two speakers supported it. The third and last was a clergyman of some distinction who certainly knew Christian youth, and he must have made their hair stand on end. Morals means customs, he said cheerfully, and the moral code is to a large extent conventional or customary. The young see this and want "a rationale of morals"; and, he added, they are "having considerable difficulty in finding one." There is a legitimate "new ethic," and in the light of it "ours is for the most part an irreligious but moral generation." The Church in educating them had made too much fuss about their bodies, and we must "revaluate our moral standards." For this, he said, we find encouragement in the Gospels. Jesus was "quite out of sympathy with the current legalism in regard to impurity." (Is it necessary to remind you that the usual clerical plea is that Jesus went beyond all contemporaries in the severity of his sex-teaching?) Did he not eat with sinners and make a pal of Mary Magdala?

His "sole recorded utterance about impurity" was that a man who looked with desire at a pretty girl committed adultery, and by this he meant to "reduce to absurdity the violent treatment of tactual impurity." (Nice phrase, that). In short, the speaker said, "I find no evidence in Jesus's teaching of any special value put by him on chastity as a thing in itself" or any "merely negative virtues." All we need do is to induce the young not to "fill their lives with carnal indulgences" by teaching them alternatives. "Our decency is deadly dull" and they want "jollier ways." So let us join the young in burying Mrs. Grundy "with rejoicing" and not "keep trundling about her increasingly unpleasant corpse."

Thus (pp. 22-28) spoke the much respected President of St. Stephen's College, Dr. B. I. Bell. No earthquake followed, as far as I can discover Bell was not decapitated or sent to a concentration-camp. The bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church turned instead upon my old friend W. Montgomery Brown and expelled him from their midst for saying that the only redemption the world needed was from poverty and war.

Which reminds me of a fact that will amuse most of my readers. All those learned books which Brown flung at the heads of his episcopal judges from 1930 to 1936, including the two books for children and the famous address to the Parliament of Religions in 1933, were written by me. I was, secretly, Bill's "literary secretary." As long as he was a good Atheist and Materialist I did not mind how many ecclesiastical titles he bought. It was, he often told me, all to be revealed in his will and a trust established to enable me to carry on the good work in my own name. But Bill was too idealistic to control money, and he died owing me a lot and leaving me without documents to secure it. In spite of his sentimental desire to keep an ecclesiastical status, which he never attempted to explain to me though he relied on me in his fight for ten years, Bill was a man of splendid character, fearless and incorruptible, passionately eager for justice to the workers, defective only in that his complete sense of honor made him too trustful of others. I have in my long tramps through life met a hundred such men and women and known hundreds of others from their books and letters, and they all belonged essentially to that "world" which Rome shudderingly defies and calumniates.

In other words, it is not only in its largely hypocritical stress on sexual purity but in its general standard of character that the Church defies modern thought and life. This is inevitable. The requirements of the Black International are ruinous to the kind of character, the straight, realistic, uncompromising character, that the modern world esteems and requires. I suppose that Michael Williams would be urged upon us by American Catholics as a fine type of lay personality not perverted by the needs of the clerical profession, yet I find his chief book, *Catholicism and the Modern Mind* (1928) a dreary tissue of sophistry and looseness in statements of fact.

He tells as a fact the story of Benedict XV and Mussolini. The Catholic legend is that during the last war, when the Papacy handled a fund for relieving the relatives of soldiers, the Pope one day noticed that the name of Signora Mussolini and her family was struck off the list. He was told that the lady's son—now the

great Duce—was an enemy of the Church, but he insisted that the name be put back, and Mussolini, hearing of the occurrence, was deeply moved and got “a new view of the Catholic Church.” I do not know whether Catholic editors generally imagine that Popes have leisure to scrutinize lists of obscure villagers far away from Rome, and I very much doubt if Mussolini would admit that his family depended on charity, but if Williams does not know that Mussolini continued for two years after the war—until he got a rich bribe—to attack the Vatican bitterly and opprobriously he is strangely ill-informed for a man in his position. He includes in the book a most generous eulogy of Bryan just after his death. Williams was reporting the trial in Dayton, and it is difficult to believe that he was not aware that, as Clarence Darrow told me, Bryan brought about his death by gluttony and had for years been notorious for gluttonous practices such as provoking a vomit to make room for more. It is not much better to find Williams solemnly endorsing the claim that Aquinas, Bellarmine, and Suarez inspired the modern ideals of freedom and democracy, and that the Catholics of Maryland taught America religious tolerance. It is a platitude of American history that the Catholics were in a minority in Maryland and used their power to get toleration for themselves. Williams endorses falsehoods and fallacies as glibly as any Jesuit.

On the other hand take Laval. In the last few days I have read a score of British and American characterizations of this repulsive adventurer. All agree that apart from the worst of the German and Italian leaders, he is the most sordid type of man thrown up to the surface in this churning up of the mud of European life, but not a single one of the writers mentions that he is a Catholic and in good odor at the Vatican. No one recalls as I did in No. 7 (First Series, p. 26), that on June 9, 1935, Laval, wearing the decoration of the Papal Order of Pius IX, visited the Pope in the Vatican, bearing rich presents, and presented his daughter, to whom, as a good Catholic, the Pope gave a gold and coral rosary. To the Vatican he was the most esteemed Catholic in France, and he became a cordial friend of the present Pope. The Papal newspaper, the *Osservatore*, gave a glowing account—you may read an abridged translation of it in *Keesing*—of the pious interview, and a member of British and American papers, not foreseeing the ghastly future and ignoring the evil reputation that Laval already had in France, reported it with respect.

I cannot ascertain the opinions of every man in this bunch of Vichy traitors to civilization who have fouled the honor of France but in the days when the Allies still had a pathetic trust that they would resist Hitler the papers ingenuously told how Petain, Weygand, and other leaders are devout Catholics. It is a Catholic group, combining docility to the Vatican with private greed for wealth and power of the most sordid type. But the press would rather leave the whole miserable business inexplicable than offend Catholics by telling the truth about it. Once more the influence of the Black International has the public fooled even on vital questions of the hour. And, as we have seen, it is not a question of France only. Catholics—Leopold of Belgium and the ministers who cling to him, Franco and his cut-throats in Spain, Salazar in

Portugal, Tizzo in Slovakia, Henlein in Sudetenland, Seyss-Inquart in Austria and Holland, De Valera in Eire, etc.—head the list of the men who have betrayed humanity in its gravest crisis, just as the Atheists of Russia head the list of those who sacrifice and die for it. How have your leading Catholics, cleric and lay, in America stood in this real struggle of good and evil? How do they still stand in Quebec? I can assure you that in Great Britain not a single Catholic, cleric or lay, stood out in the ranks of the fighters for civilization.

It is a mockery to find the Church of Rome boasting of its richness in "saints" when, at a time of supreme need of character and virility, it pushes into positions of power only muddle-headed weaklings like Leopold and Petain or an unscrupulous blackguard like Laval. From Cape Cod to San Diego the Black International is bemusing its children, of all ages, with a legend of the peculiar "holiness" of their Church. No other religion in the world, they say, can show such a list of men and women of fine character. I illustrated the grossly fraudulent nature of this list by a few words on the "Holy Fathers" in the first booklet of this series, and have shown elsewhere (Little Blue Book, 1107) that saints and martyrs were fabricated by the thousands for the first half of the story of the Roman Church. But what standard of character for the modern world is there in the overwhelming majority of those who were really historical? They were just men and women who took seriously the theory that for every pleasure you sacrificed during a few decades of life you won a hundred times as much during a whole eternity. That is not character. It is trade. Yet so poor is the real moral influence of the Church that it hardly persuades any of its followers in modern times to attain that degree of commercial logic. The one or two men and women who today are selected (out of hundreds of millions) every year or so for canonization are really chosen for diplomatic reasons—to please particular countries—and to bring a modest shower of gold to Rome.

Where, moreover, Catholics do make strained efforts to rise toward the level of these "saints" they generally succeed in contracting the vices—hard intolerance and pious unscrupulousness—of the fanatical saints rather than the virtues of the more human. They are apt to be sour, cruel, unjust, slanderous, and convinced that the end, if it is the good of the Church, justifies the means. They lose the sense of citizenship whenever the clergy urge them to use their voting power in the interest of the Church. Everybody will know Catholics who have not these vices. No one pretends that all of them are puritans and bigots of the sourer type. But would you say that the geniality and straightforwardness of the Catholics you admire is a result of their faith and the sourness and intolerance of others is not a result of Catholic teaching? Would you say that this daily literature of theirs which describes the whole non-Catholic world as a contamination, this literature which describes critics of the Church as dishonest and malignant, has no ill effect on their general character?

The medieval character of their ethics gives them a rigidity of mind that very largely unfits them for that censorship of other people's lives which they always claim. Take their matter of

chastity, celibate or married, which they almost make identical with "morals." I referred on an earlier page to the importance of the sex hormones, the secretions of sex and some other ductless glands, which differ in different individuals just as the secretions of the liver or the pancreas do and cause the varieties which we call "strong passions" or "coldness" and every stage between the two extremes. But no Catholic moralist ever takes this elementary truth of physiology into account. Then have a wooden theory that everybody has a "free will," and the nymphomaniac is just a "vile woman" who will not control her passions while the spinster or nun who shrinks from men because she has none or a very feeble amount of the sexual hormones in her veins is a very superior or virtuous woman. It is, the Catholic thinks, cynical, materialistic, degrading to say such things. Scientific works which prove and explain them ought to be suppressed.

If it were not for the suffocating influence which the Black International has won over the press, literature, radio, schools, etc., what they call the "world" would laugh in their faces. They belong, like our astrologers and palmists, to the Middle Ages; at least their theories do, for there was far more sexual freedom in practice in the Middle Ages than there is today. How long the world will tolerate these dervishes dictating the dresses of girls on the stage or screen—and probably sneaking in with scarves over their collars to see the pictures they could not suppress—is a matter of astonishment to us older men. We want neighbors who are genial, truthful, straightforward. We want public men who are virile, strictly honest, broad-minded. We do not care two pins about their amorous adventures. We live in a world in which for various reasons a very large body of women will never marry; we are passing into a world of mourning in which millions of girls and women of every country will not be able to marry. To forbid them normal life because some 2,500 years ago somebody started the idea that the devil made the flesh and Paul made a religion of it is as cruel as it is unintelligent. And to say that we folk who have patiently traced this ancient ethic to its roots and severely checked its action in history are to be counted a danger to civilization, while these priests who nearly succeeded in selling civilization for thirty pieces of silver are to be considered its custodians, is simply ludicrous. In a sense all this fury about the world reminds us of Don Quixote tilting at windmills, but the Black International is not a crack-brained knight with a simple-minded servant. It is an international army of, in one costume or other, a million men and women, and the horror that grips the world is in part its movement.

## Chapter IV

## WHY PRIESTS DO NOT MARRY

The vow of chastity of priests, monks, and nuns is one of the most absurd complications into which this attempt to govern modern life by an ancient superstition leads the Roman Church. Both in the age when, in the early Church, the Fathers decided that celibacy was the ideal life for the clergy and in the age (the 11th Century) when a brood of fanatics finally imposed it upon the clergy the reason alleged for it was simple. There was something, not exactly revolting (if you were married) but certainly very indelicate and contaminating, in all sexual intercourse. A really holy person must abstain from it. It was not true that, as the heretics said, the devil had made the body, yet there certainly was something unclean about its reproductive department, and in a rigmarole of doctrinal reasoning the Fathers connected it once more with the devil by saying that God had created the body clean but Adam had brought about a mysterious change by yielding to the tempter.

It is quite impossible for priests to give this explanation to their men and women followers today. In moral theology casuists try to work out just what, of a sexual nature, is forbidden even to married folk. It is an amusing chapter but I dare not give illustrations. These chapters of Catholic moral theology on sex would, if he could read them, make an Irish policeman's hair stand on end. Practically, sodomy apart, married Catholics have a free run. Herodotus says that the ancient Babylonians, whom modern Catholics regard as so very wicked, compelled a married pair after intercourse to get up and, in modern language, say their prayers. Your Irish, Polish, and Italian married folk on the contrary. . . . No. I must give it up. But believe me that they are not told any longer that there is anything in any way repellent about the sex-organs or intercourse once you have the priestly license. At the most there is sometimes an attempt to represent that the voluntary virgin is in some sense superior on account of her sacrifice; but girls are, I understand, rather skeptical about claims of voluntary spinsterhood.

The reasons which the Church gives today for keeping its clergy in this unnatural condition are not taken very seriously. It wants them to be free from the entanglements and burdens of married life so that they may devote themselves strictly to their arduous duties; which is not very convincing when we reflect that men who work 40 to 50 hours a week very much prefer to have the entanglement of marriage whereas the average priest scarcely has ten or fifteen hours a week of not very exacting work. A more serious reason is military discipline. Clerical authorities have a more effective control of what we may call the private soldiers of the Black International army if they have no families;

but that is not the kind of reason that they can give to the laity or the world at large. Catholic women, in fact, do not want any reason, and, as there are twice as many women as men in the only congregations that expect any reasons for anything from the Church—those with more money and more education—it is not expedient to say anything about celibacy. You never hear a sermon on it. The women would not have the fluttering regard for their priests which they have if there were a wife looking on or in the background, and they could hardly avoid an uneasy feeling at times that their picturesque confessions might not in spite of the “seal of confession,” slip out at night when the married priest sipped his final highball at night by the fire with his wife. Experience gives women a rather cynical view of things one hears “in confidence.”

None of these reasons, in any case, explains the celibacy of monks, nuns, and religious brothers, and for this there is no serious reason except the historic plea that virginity is superior to non-virginity because there is something animal and low about sex-indulgence even with a license. You might roundly say that the Church will not abandon the celibacy of its priests, monks, and nuns, though in all ages many sincere bishops have urged it to do so, because this is an important part of the uniqueness amongst religious bodies of which it is so proud. No other Church, except the corrupted Buddhism of Eastern Asia, can get hordes of men and women to make the great sacrifice. That is true, but there is uniqueness in vice as well as virtue, in stupidity as well as wisdom, and the Church can only boast of the voluntary virginity of its vast clerical and monastic army if abstention from sex-indulgence gives a man or woman a superior moral condition.

So we come back always to the original root of all this morbid glorification of virginity and dark view of sex. The early Church was, as everybody knows, cradled in a mighty struggle of those who called themselves orthodox Christians and those whom they called Gnostic heretics. This cradle, as I call it, was the line of cities round the eastern end of the Mediterranean—Judaea had really little to do with the origin of Christianity as a new religion—and the whole region was steeped in the new ascetic mysticism which Persian influence had engendered, Egyptians, Jews, Syrians, and Greeks as well as Persians all having different versions of it. Common to almost all of them was the belief that the devil had created matter, and that the quintessence of its diabolism, so to say, was found in the organs of generation. There are modern writers who hold that what came to be called Christianity was at first just a local variation of this widespread Gnosticism. It seems to me more probable that the Gnostics fastened upon the story of Jesus which was then spreading and represented him as a splendid confirmation of their creed (already a century or two old); a Demigod or semi-God sent by the Father of Light and Spirit to lead men in the fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil.

However that may be, not even Catholics dispute that it was a general tenet of the Gnostic leaders that the flesh, especially in its sex-part—one often wonders whether the nearness of the sex-organ to the excretory organs had not a lot to do with the odium it incurred amongst these mystics—was so thoroughly evil that



even a marriage-license did not remove the unpleasantness. The Catholic leaders or Fathers retorted that God created man, body and soul, and, though the body was fouled by the sin of Adam and Eve, God provided for the continuation of the race by instituting marriage for the less holy crowd who could not live up to the strain of virginity. As this is not in the least disputed I need not quote. Contemporary Greeks of inquiring mind must have had a pleasant time watching these rival Christians cracking each other's skulls as they did, over the question. All the more influential of the early Fathers—Irenaeus, Polycarp, Athenagoras, Clement, etc.—took this view that marriage (Athenagoras called it "a specious adultery") was just a concession to weaklings and that sex stank in the nostrils of holy people. The most learned Christian of the age, Origen, nicknamed Chalcenteros ("Brass-Guts"), castrated himself to get rid of the beastly obsession.

The Roman Church, as I have earlier explained, humanized its attitude when it found that the Romans continued to despise the obscure little conventicle across the river. Irenaeus, who tells us all about the Gnostics, says that they held that "marriage and generation are from Satan" and "marriage is corruption and fornication." This did not suit the ladies of Rome—the men of higher class never had anything to do with the Church until they were compelled by law—and the Popes made marriage easier for them than Roman law did and in addition promised them absolution from all their adulteries and abortions (the contemporary Bishop Hippolytus tells us). But the great leaders of the Church even in the west, the men, whose writings were to rule the belief of the Middle Ages, persisted in the disdain of sex. Tertullian poured fierce scorn on the Popes for apostitizing from the true Christian doctrine. Jerome talked to his school of virgin-pupils as if sex were very much more unpleasant than defalcation—he uses a much broader word than that—and Augustine in his later years went to weird extremes. In his treatise *On Conjugal Love* (never translated, of course) he says that the sex-pleasure is evil and must not be desired or enjoyed as such even by married folk. They just dispassionately have, to keep the race going. Even Solomon and the Hebrew patriarchs did not seek pleasure, he says, but had so many wives from a pure sense of duty. And since the maintenance of the race is now assured, superior men and women, will cut out sex altogether. He even goes so far as to admit that on this view of marriage a man who finds his wife barren may take a concubine in addition (c. XV): an opinion never mentioned by Christian writers on Augustine. He was so obsessed with this view of marriage and sex—if it were not in Augustine a modern Catholic writer would call it soulless, mechanical, and materialistic—that he wrote book after book (*On Holy Virginity*, *On the Blessedness of Widowhood*, *On Marriage and Concupiscence*, etc.) to enforce it.

It is agreed that Augustine's works were the Bible of the Middle Ages, but the phrase is very misleading. Not one of the laity in a hundred thousand ever read them or took the least notice of his theory; and probably not one priest or monk in ten thousand shared his contempt of sex. As far as we have any positive indications of general behavior there never was another lengthy period with such sexual freedom—in the first part (to about 1050) such

sheer animalism—as the eleven or twelve centuries that followed the triumph of the Roman Church. The only practical issue of the teaching of the Fathers was that bishops who sincerely shared it tried to get marriage forbidden to the priests; and in so far as they were successful they brought upon the world a flood of vice of a new type—sex-indulgence not merely without license but in spite of solemn vows to avoid it. In earlier works (*History of the Roman Church, History of Morals, etc.*) I have shown that Lea's *History of Sacerdotal Celibacy* gives much material, but there is more in French works like Chavard's *Le celibat, le pretre, et la femme* (1894).

On the other hand the story of the development of the law or custom of sacerdotal celibacy is, as usual, falsely told by Catholic writers; one of whom seems to have got the job of writing the article on it in the new and painfully pro-Catholic *Encyclopedia Americana*. The best generally available article is that in the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*. Attempts to impose the law were local, rare, and soon obliterated. The *Decretum Gratiani*, the basic document of Canon Law, names ten Popes of the first few centuries who were sons of bishops and says that there were "a great number of others" (Chavard). The St. Patrick of whom Irish priests talk so much, was the son of a Roman deacon who was the son of a priest. The great Council of Nicaea turned down the proposal to pass a law of celibacy, and it is merely misleading to quote a provincial council that passed a law once in a century for its own region. By the year 1000, Prof. Cross moderately says, priests were still commonly married and where they were forbidden there was "more or less flagrant concubinage" and other evils. Bishops, of course, made money out of the situation by making a priest pay for permission to have a woman in his house. Cornelius Agrippa tells us that a bishop of the 11th Century levied a concubine-tax on 11,000 priests. When it was pointed out to him that they did not all want concubines he said: "Let them pay whether they want one or not—then they can please themselves."

There is nothing in the history of religion remotely like the general license of Catholic priests, monks, and nuns from the 4th Century to the 16th. In Catholic circles all this is called "a few irregularities, and the faithful are uplifted with a charming account of the way in which their unique Church inspired millions to forswear the most intense pleasure in life (on the promise of 1,000 percent interest in the next life) while no other branch of the Christian Church could inspire any. It certainly was unique—in a consecrated vice which makes the practice of the sacred prostitutes of ancient religions look white in comparison. But for all that I must refer to my larger books.

With these 800 years of clerical and monastic vice before their eyes—for although history was then rudimentary, every saint whom they read, from Jerome, Augustine, and Benedict onward, testified to it—the monks who captured the Papacy in the 12th Century set out to impose a universal law of chastity. Some day, when professors are permitted to write in freedom, one of them may write a very interesting work on the influence of men and women with feeble or no sexual hormones on the development of moral idealism. Some years ago a well-known British Catholic apologist

hinted, writing for Catholics, that I had descended to some vague but awful depth which he had not expected even of me. What had I done? Merely suggested that Hildebrand, Damiani, and Anselmo of Lucca, the monks of the Papal Court who led the fight against the marriage of priests, were probably impotent: a condition which, if they enjoyed it, would have filled them with pride. Anyhow it did not lower their fighting qualities. The language which Cardinal Damiani uses in his extant sermons provide an outfit for a New York stevedore. They led imperial troops and the scum of the Italian cities (to whom they promised the loot of married priests' houses) and after years of struggle imposed celibacy on all priests and monks (some of whom were still married).

There followed four centuries of worse vice than ever, as a very high proportion of the clergy had hitherto been married. The state of Christendom was such that several Church Councils seriously considered the question of revoking the law—see Coulter's excellent article in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*—but Rome never abandons a policy that it considers to its advantage because it causes vice or suffering. At the Council of Trent, when half of Europe was now full of heretics scornfully describing the corruption of the Church, another attempt was made to revoke the law. Bishops representing the Emperor described in the darkest colors the state of the Church and demanded the marriage of priests and the suppression of monastic bodies. Rome, still corrupt, opposed the reform, and Trent turned what had hitherto been only a matter of discipline into a dogma. It pronounced "anathema" on any who should ever again oppose celibacy. In recent times, in spite of this, bodies of priests in various countries have raised the question again. A French priest, Jules Claraz, gives an account of these in his *Mariage des pretres*, and his book was at once put on the Index. Catholics were to be protected in their illusion that their priests joyously and loyally sustain the vow.

Naturally large numbers of Catholics, especially men, have their doubts. A friend of mine visiting relatives in the Rhine Province while the trials of monks for sodomy were revealing to Germany the amazing corruption of the Church asked several who lived near the infected monasteries what they thought of the revelation. "We always had some suspicion of it" they said. But again the Black International took every precaution to keep the truth about their "holy men" out of the press. Haldeman-Julius was the one publisher in Britain or America who let me tell that truth. Five years after the first series of trials, in which 250 monks (religious brothers) were brought up in the courts of Catholic cities and put through ordinary legal procedure that the Catholics of the provinces fully respected, a widely-read novel on German life said that the Nazis brought against the monks foul charges "in support of which they had never adduced any evidence." By that time thousands of witnesses had been examined in the open courts of Catholic Bonn, Cologne, Coblenz, and Munich—not in Nazi courts—and several thousand priests and monks who had taken the vow of virginity were in jail for sodomy or corruption of the young Catholics pleaded that the proportion of priests was small. Naturally, simple fornication is not an offense in German law and no priest was arrested for it.

I have in an earlier number given ground to believe that the majority of priests today violate their vow. In Catholic countries this notoriously is the situation. See the picture of Catholic life by a man who lives in a solidly Catholic country which I quoted in No. 14 of this series. Here I speak of America, and on the basis of conversations with ex-priests in America. What else would any sensible man expect? Recruits for the priesthood are usually secured at the age of 13 to 15. They have, as a rule, the habits of youths at that age, but a renunciation of marriage is still to them a vague and not intimidating prospect. Its irksome features are outweighed by what they have been taught to regard as the high prestige of the priest's position. They are for the most part sons of working-class or lower middle-class parents, preferably of Italian, Polish, Irish, or German blood, and to them ordination means elevation to a social rank of which, unless they became priests, they have no hope.

I am not here generalizing from a personal experience, though my parents belonged to the lower middle-class. But I was not sexually developed until I was 26, and the successive vows of chastity I ruled off as candidate for the monastery and the priesthood, meant nothing to me. Such freaks as I are rare, but, though the overwhelming majority of candidates are sexually mature at the first vows, they are too young to realize what the life-sacrifice means and are dazed by the prospect of the easy, comfortable, and privileged life of the priest. A Catholic would explain to you that Rome is always willing to consider a request for an annulment of the vow in its first form. Yes, Rome, not the local bishop. It is made more intimidating by this need to appeal to the Vatican; and, especially, it requires a moral courage that very few youths and girls possess to come back to a Catholic home and friends, after taking the vow of a cleric or a nun, and meet the almost contemptuous glances from all sides and the bitter disappointment of one's family.

Certainly this celibacy of the clergy is unique to the Roman Church. No other would tolerate an institution that is so cruel to the loyal, so productive of hypocrisy in the disloyal. It is part of the hard, calculating, unscrupulous attitude of a body of men who believe that the end justifies the means. It makes the Roman Church a fit ally for the Axis powers.

## Chapter V

MELODRAMA ABOUT THE WORLD, THE FLESH,  
AND THE DEVIL

It seems at first sight an amazing thing to suggest that a Church which boasts that it has more hundreds of millions of members in this age of science, than any other religion in the world should embody in its teachings, indeed force upon our attention, ideas which were elucabrated by shaggy dervishes speculating on life on the Persian hills 2,500 or more years ago. It becomes bewildering when we find this Church in one breath defying the world in which (or on which) it lives as something alien and contaminating and in the next breath boasting that its principles are in perfect harmony with those of the most advanced democracy of the age. I have explained a good deal of the paradox. The American apologist says that what his Church agrees with, what it has in fact itself inspired, is the fundamental American principle of freedom and democracy, and what it defies and attacks is its godlessness (as a state) and its paganism in art and morals. But when you press these very logical professors for definitions you find them quoting Papal declarations that "freedom" must be understood in the "Catholic sense," which means a galling tyranny, and democracy means, in a Catholic mouth and in the Papal Encyclical of 1931, the kind of rule we see in Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Vichy France. As to those apologists who add that in religious toleration we have another point of agreement or of American learning from Catholicism, I have quoted their most authoritative writers brazenly admitting that the Church is and must be "intolerant" and could have quoted as many more as you wish. But as I gave the text of the Church Law, officially published in Rome, on the complete refusal of the rights to other Churches, the dogmatic rejection of the right of "freedom of conscience" (or to follow your reasoned convictions in regard to religion), and the "right and duty" of the Church to put seceders from its ranks to death, there is no need to say more.

Every attempt of these apologists to clear their Church of a charge of hard and selfish arrogance in these respects brings us back to the original paradox: the Church is defying the modern world on the grounds of ancient Asiatic superstitions. It is a sheer lie that its principles are in harmony with the principles and ideals of America; it is a hypocritical pretense that the Church contributes so effectively to the social welfare that on this ground alone it deserves the very privileged and insolent position it has usurped in the country. When the apologists are writing for Catholics they betray themselves. The whole of the arrogance, insolence, intrigue, unscrupulousness, deception, and ambition for wealth and power of the Church, of which in these books we have seen so much, are ingenuously explained on the ground that the supreme

consideration in men's affairs is eternal salvation, that the Roman Church is the only appointed Ark of Salvation, and that in all its usurpations and claims it is performing this work by fighting the devil, the world, and the flesh. And this means that it builds upon a theory which in its root takes us back to a semi-civilized small nation (the Persians before Cyrus) whose ideas the Greeks and Romans despised. It defies all our science, all our common sense, all our hard-won liberties in the name of this wild vagary of the imagination in an age of profound ignorance. Let me give two further illustrations from current Catholic literature.

The first is from a piece of British literature but it is so important from the Catholic viewpoint that it is worth considering. As one part of their attempt to force their way into the cultural swim, British Catholics began some years ago to hold a Summer School under the shadow of the venerable University of Cambridge. In the holiday sessions of 1931 the subject was human nature, and the papers read are published with the title *Man* (1932). The big guns were trundled along from all the chief Catholic colleges in England, so you are not reading vapid and irresponsible jibes at modern thought like W. D. Nutting's *How Firm A Foundation?* (1939). Yet the whole book is a flat defiance of modern scholarship in the name of ancient superstitions as served up in *Genesis*.

Dr. T. E. Flynn deals with the evolution of man. He shows that all Catholics are compelled to believe that the whole human race descends from Adam and that Eve was made out of Adam. You may be relieved to know that the Church does not insist on the rib, and that, while it does insist that God made Adam out of earth or dust or something, it is not obligatory to believe that, as the aged colored man put it, God shaped Adam out of a lump of clay and breathed life into it; but the evolution, even of the body, is out of the question for a Catholic (p. 160). Others of the learned Catholic professors agreed and carried on the story through the Garden of Eden, the Fall, Original Sin, and Redemption. The dogmas based upon this ancient Asiatic series of folk-stories are, the writers say, binding upon every Catholic today just as they were formulated by the Council of Trent.

The second book, *The Two Kingdoms* (1931), is a series of essays by six well-known British priests with—note this—a very cordial letter of introduction by the late Cardinal Bourne, assuring you that it is quite sound Catholicism. The "two kingdoms" are, of course, the Kingdom (or City) of God and the Kingdom of Man, as expounded in Augustine's *City of God*, the centenary of whose death has inspired the volume. And the burden of it is that the Catholic holds fast to that dreary gospel of Augustine's senile years. What the authors do not seem to know is that they are holding fast, not merely to ideas put forward by an old man in the days when Roman culture was in complete decay but the ideas, slightly Christianized, of the Persian Avesta.

Our world, it seems, is gathering round two poles, "Catholicism and Antichrist." If that does not raise a laugh see your doctor. The world of the blackguards of Vichy, Italy, Spain, Hungary, and Slovakia is "Catholicism," the pole of light and virtue; at the pole of darkness and vice, Antichrist, you have their opponents. Naturally, the priest-writers do not see this. The world, they say,

has been comprehensively debauched by the Freemasons. In proof of this they offer us forged documents like Father Coughlin's **Protocols**, and you learn how these agents of the devil write to each other. "It is a corruption **en masse** that we have undertaken . . . the corruption which ought, one day, to enable us to put the Church in her tomb" (p. 118). This horrible plot of Blum, Azana, Reynaud, etc. is carried out by "the debauching of popular intelligence by manipulated news, lying catch words, and sordid pleasures" (chiefly the cinema). All this is a preparation for the coming and reign of Antichrist and the end of the world. The writers—remember, not a bunch of Georgia Baptists or Nevada Adventists but Catholic priests of authority—have carefully studied **Revelation**, the Jewish-Gnostic boiling hash of Persian ideas and hatred of Romans. They see the "signs of the second coming of Christ multiplying." Hitler? Japan? No, no; this was in 1931. "In the mind of the Church Antichrist, the final Antichrist, will be a man, and we may well conclude that he will be the representative of a great world-movement of universal peace and material prosperity" (194). Queer dress for an Antichrist. For a moment I had a wild idea that they meant either me or Haldeman-Julius, but the next page disillusioned me. The end is to be preceded—see the Good Book—by the spread of a universal false religion, and here is the cream of it:

Is it an improbable conjecture that humanistic philosophy, biology, psychology, and sociology, with the aid of false history and the deceptive marvels of Spiritism, may supply this, and then Antichrist as the necessary concrete object of worship? (195).

Nuts, you say: turn to something serious. But I have already explained that these priests are important enough and their ideas are sound enough from the Catholic angle to get a warm letter of introduction from Cardinal Bourne, head of the Roman Church in England and considered one of its leading scholars.

The Greeks had a word for this thing. But make no mistake about it. This is, apart from the hints that the end of the world is near, just the ordinary Catholic attitude. The Antichrist idea would probably today be put in reserve. It is sound Catholic doctrine that some time or other, instead of this nonsense that astronomers talk about a failure of the sun in 200,000,000 years or so, the world will be all corrupted and the poor Church hard pressed, and then Christ will come from the clouds and knock Antichrist into a cocked hat. But from the Catholic angle the world has mightily improved in the last ten years, and the evil reign has been put off for, perhaps—if we trust Adolf's intuition—a thousand years. Catholic power and its blessings—joy, peace and prosperity—spread from land to land (Italy, Spain—but you know the list), and when Hitler has wiped the floor of Europe with the Russians and Japan has cleared Americans and British out of Asia the Pope will get the reward of his alliance.

Seriously, this melodramatic stuff is Catholicism. The system of ideas and practices as a whole we will examine in the next book, but one of the most important factors in the Church's remarkable hold on some 100,000,000 folk (omitting children and savages) is

its representation that the world, the flesh, and the devil—though the three-in-one means a legion of devils that multiplies by spontaneous generation as the race multiplies—are out for their immortal souls, and the Church alone can effectively foil them. Hence the morbid emphasis on sex. Ahriman—in good Christian, Satan—may not have created the flesh but he has sort of monopolized or annexed it. He invented the motion-picture and the photo-electric cell, he inspired torch-dances and strip-teases and those glossy pictures you see in the advertisement columns, until the chaste and austere Knights of Columbus and knaves of Tammany rushed to the rescue of American civilization. He was getting advertisements of his literature into respectable American papers until the Holy Family and the Children of Mary and the League of Kindergarten Pupils were used to send the editors letters reminding them that this is a free country and there are more ways than one of knocking an editor on the head.

It is a topsy-turvy world. Catholics number, as I showed, about 180,000,000, if you include children and illiterates on the fringe of civilization. In countries that we consider fully civilized and organized they are about one-twentieth of the population. They turn upon the 1920's with an insolence, an air of superiority, like that of a duchess amongst her maids; and this air of superiority is based upon a belief in devils and in uncleanness of sex that belongs essentially to an age of profound ignorance. Catholic Action, remember, is not based upon the smooth approaches of Catholic politicians when they seek office or influence, or on the tactical affability of Jesuits in dealing with non-Catholics, or on the spontaneous neighborliness of Catholic men and women of the less fanatical type. It is based upon the teaching and attitude of the Church as I have quoted them from the most authoritative sources. It is in virtue of these doctrines that Catholics are reconciled to see their Black International drag them into alliance with all that is vilest and most dangerous in modern life.

Yet in America and Britain the nine-tenths or nineteen-twentieths of the nation that are described in Catholic literature as a debauched generation, a contamination and danger to the virtuous Catholic family, load the Church with eulogies and privileges. Upton Sinclair had the amusing impertinence to say, when Haldeman-Julius invited him to reply to me, that he refused to have anything to do with us because we did not rely upon "facts" as he did! What has he done in regard to the massive volume of ugly facts which I have given in these books? He illustrates his meaning by quoting the instance of telepathy—on which, by the way, I spent months of research and wrote many pages before, apparently, he ever heard of it—and seems to invite us to bury ourselves in a mound of tricky claims about this triviality while the Black International gathers such wealth and power that it helps to flood the world with misery and hopes to paralyze freedom in America. It has already won such a position that the literature in which it argues in favor of these weird ideas of the Dancing Dervishes of old times is treated with deep respect by the press and libraries, while literature in which we warn the world of the facts is deliberately isolated from the public and treated as disreputable. If statesmen, writers, editors, and professors really



think that they can maintain the solidity of their civilization by sacrificing all their professed respect for reality and justice in one important field and asserting it in others, by flattering what they know to be untruth and closing their eyes to social poison, we do not wonder that the fortunes of the race are so dangerously menaced. It was by taking advantage of just such an attitude in America, Britain, and France that the Axis powers gathered their formidable strength.



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