

The Catholic Journal

PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY AT 22 Cortland Street, Rochester, N. Y.

CATHOLIC JOURNAL PUBLISHING COMPANY

IF paper is not received Saturday notify the office... Report without any delay change of address...

SUBSCRIPTION RATES For Year, in Advance \$1.00

Registered at second class mail matter.

ROCHESTER TELEPHONE 1303

Friday, Feb 12, 1949

Questions

There are many Catholic writers who favor calling themselves "Catholics" while there are others who argue that "Roman Catholic" is not only a proper term but that it is the proper term to employ.

Both these and their adherents and Catholics in general will be interested in the following exhaustive discussion from the Bombay "Guardian".

Question: I came across an example some days ago of a difference of view, in which a Bishop favored "Catholic" and his secretary "Roman Catholic". I have had disputes myself many times on the subject. Would you kindly elucidate?

Answer: This dispute will probably go on forever, for the simple reason that it turns not on the mere dictionary significance of words, but on the mental association with which they are taken and the effects their use is calculated to have on different classes of men. The following strikes us as a sane view:

1. "Roman Catholic" is not a Catholic expression. Our official forms are "Una Sancta Catholica et Apostolica Ecclesia," or "Ecclesia Catholica et Romana," or "Ecclesia Catholica" simply. The term "Roman Catholic" seems to have been invented by Protestants, and stereotyped by its official adoption in government circles.

2. We should not object to the title if it retained its original significance as the simple designation of a body which claims to be the Catholic Church and at the same time acknowledges the Bishop of Rome as the head of that Church. Our ground of objection has been created by those Anglicans who, in claiming themselves to be Catholics, use the name Roman Catholic side by side with Anglo-Catholic to designate two branches of the one Catholic Church. Since we claim to be exclusively the Catholic Church, and repudiate the right of Anglicans to call themselves Catholics at all, we object to being dubbed Roman Catholics because the epithet "Roman" has come to be used in a distinctive sense as denoting a merely one class or sub-section of Catholics.

3. Apart from this, "Roman Catholic" is a good name. It contains the two essential ideas of our position—viz., that we are the Catholic Church, and that the Catholic Church has its centre and head in Rome. It becomes a bad name as soon as it is taken to mean a species or sub-division of Catholics. To put it in terms of grammar: If "Roman" is taken as an epithet in opposition to "Catholic" the term is a good one. As soon as "Roman" is taken restrictively as qualifying "Catholic" it is a bad one.

4. As a matter of fact, nowadays it is often used in the latter sense, and is therefore objectionable. Hence a desire among many of us to insist on calling ourselves simply "Catholics" and to let the "Roman" drop.

5. At the same time "Roman Catholic" always ought to be

used in legal documents containing legacies or bequests. For if the term "Catholic" merely is used, it may result in a lawsuit to decide which sort of a Catholic is meant, whereas, if "Roman Catholic" is used, there can be no ambiguity whatever.

There is no use quarreling on the subject, as if one side were right and the other wrong. Those who prefer "Roman Catholic" can find several grounds for their preference, while those who prefer "Catholic" can also find several grounds for theirs. Both views can be tolerated as reasonable alike in principle and in practice. The position a man takes in this matter depends not on the discovery of any objective truth, but on his being impressed by the points on one side rather than those on the other. Though personally preferring the term "Catholic" I believe that the Church can hold her own perfectly well against all Anglican endeavors to obscure her title, and that people will not be taken in by it for long.

Serious.

Really, the Catholic Union and Times in the following editorial furnishes what must be food for reflection to every Protestant who reads it. We have often been asked for our opinion on the number of Protestants really baptized. It is a subject beyond the scope of human skill to learn. God alone knows, because of His infinite knowledge. When we consider how many there are who regard baptism not as a gate of the Church through which a man enters to become a citizen of Christ's kingdom—a Christian—but a mere empty form with no more significance to most Protestants than taking "their letter" out or putting it in some particular congregation, we are prone to think that there are few valid baptisms. Then, again, if we regard the indifference to the junction of matter and form in the administration of the sacrament, we still find reason to adhere to our opinion regarding the fewness of real baptisms in Protestantism. Often the minister pronounces the words before or after and not during the time he immerses the subject. Sprinkling is a doubtful affair, as supposing the words rightly and timely pronounced a drop may miss its purpose. Then higher criticism has given such privileges to the wise(?) that they change the form and substitute the name of "God" therefor, thus obliterating Christ's institution.

Lately we asked an Episcopalian preacher what he thought of the baptism of a Prince, wherein one Archbishop held the baby, another pronounced the words, and a third poured water (cologne, because the baby was of the royal blood), and he unhesitatingly answered, "Oh, there was no need for so many ministers, but Princes must have something special. The baptism was alright."

Here, then, supposing genuine water, the form no more animated the matter than does the soul which fled a man's body and left it a stark corpse. There was nevertheless, no question of validity, by this minister, deemed a good man, and a so-called priest of the Church of England. This man of God had no objection to cologne, save for the expense, despite the fact that he often, doubtless, dilated on the Jordan, a stream of water, very common in truth, in its character, but very proper for baptism. "Liberty" has lately "cut such fantastic tricks before high heaven" that we can well doubt everything that Protestantism does, as it pretains to the sacraments, for the right of private judgment undoes ever the right of Christ.

It cost more to get out of trouble than to keep out.

Why?

Here is a splendid hint for Catholic philanthropy in the following editorial taken from the "Colored Man's Friend":

Some time ago we met on a train a lawyer of one of the smaller towns of this State, with whom we have been personally acquainted for some years. After the usual handshake and greeting this lawyer began to talk on the Negro question, and said among other things "I wanted to tell you something for the longest time, which I know will interest you as well as other Catholics. We have a settlement of colored Catholics, about fifty or sixty families, between three and four miles from our town. These people came from Louisiana, and whilst most of them are renters, there are several who have succeeded in buying a piece of land. They are industrious and orderly, respectable toward their white neighbors, and their conduct is such that until now we have not had a case in court from the whole colony. The difference between these Negroes and the others living in and around our town is like day and night, and I have often been wondering what could be the cause of such difference. I have come to the conclusion that it must be their religion which has changed them into such good people."

"You have just hit the nail on the head," we interrupted him. "It is the Catholic religion which changes the Negro into a different man."

"But," the lawyer continued, "if this is the case, and your Church is aware of it, why does it not make more efforts towards the conversion of the race? Colored people of this kind are welcome everywhere, and we are trying to get as many of them, as we can for one colony. Such is the statement of a Protestant Southerner about Catholic Negroes. Should this not be an incentive to our Catholics to support the colored missions and assist every way possible in the work of conversion and uplifting of the race?"

Paradoxes.

In a delightfully whimsical manner, Mr. Gilbert K. Chesterton, the English essayist tells in his book on "Orthodoxy" how he reached Truth and was converted to Catholicity by the way of paradox. Here are a few characteristic passages:

"I did, like all other solemn little boys, try to be in advance of the age. Like them I tried to be some ten minutes in advance of the truth. And I found that I was eighteen hundred years behind it. I did strain my voice with a painful juvenile exaggeration in uttering my truths. And I was punished in the fittest and funniest way, for I have kept my truths; but I have discovered, not that they were not truths, but that they were not mine. When I fancied that I stood alone I was really in the ridiculous position of being backed up by all Christendom."

"To accept everything is an exercise, to understand everything a strain. The poet only desires exaltation and expansion, a world to stretch himself in. The poet only asks to get his head into the heavens. It is the logician who seeks to get the heavens into his head. And it is his head that splits. "If you are merely a skeptic, you must sooner or later ask yourself the question. "Why should anything go right; even observation and deduction? Why should not good logic be misleading at bad logic? They are both movements in the brain of a bewildered ape." The young skeptic, says, "I have no right to think for myself." But the old skeptic, the complete skeptic says, "I have no right to think for myself. I have no right to think at all."

"An imbecile habit has arisen in modern controversy of saying

that such and such a creed can be held in one age, but cannot be held in another. Some dogma, we are told, was credible in the twelfth century, but is not credible in the twentieth. You might say that a certain philosophy can be believed on Mondays, but cannot be believed on Tuesdays."

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