

### THE SOURCES OF MODERN ATTACKS AGAINST THE CHURCH

During the past couple of years the American press has reported an unusually large number of attacks and charges against the Catholic Church. Taken individually, a great many of these charges are not serious enough to warrant any particular attention. Far too frequently they manifest themselves as mere bids for publicity put forward by individuals who would apparently find tremendous difficulty in doing any work more exigent intellectually than that of shouting against the true Church of Jesus Christ. Often too these contemporary accusations against the Church turn out to be nothing more important than routine handouts from the faceless men of Moscow.

Considered collectively, however, the various contemporary charges against the Catholic Church are extremely important. They form the center of a mass of propaganda calculated to turn people away from Our Lord and from His Church. Any man who is aware of the fact that it is God's will that all men should be saved through Our Lord in the Church is bound by charity to do whatever he can towards pointing out the fallacious character of these onslaughts against the true Church. The obligation of indicating the errors contained in contemporary charges against the Catholic Church naturally enough rests primarily upon the Catholic priest. Hence an understanding of the best way to deal with such attacks against the Church forms an integral part of what we may call the necessary professional knowledge of the contemporary priest.

#### CATHOLICS AND GROUP-SOLIDARITY

Strange to say there can be found an occasional Catholic, and sometimes even an occasional priest, who will disapprove of efforts on the part of Catholics to answer and to challenge published attacks upon the Church. For some reason or other such procedure is supposed to indicate the presence of an undesirable and intense group-consciousness among Catholics. It is extremely difficult to see how any educated Catholic could bring himself to imagine that a highly developed group-consciousness could be other than absolutely requisite in the Church of Jesus Christ.

The love of His disciples, that is of the members of the Catholic Church, *for one another* is supposed, according to Our Blessed Lord Himself, to be clear and obvious enough to serve to identify these disciples for what they are. It was to the disciples that Our Lord spoke these words.

A new commandment I give unto you: That you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another.<sup>1</sup>

Again the unity (or the group-solidarity) of the disciples was, according to the prayer of Our Lord Himself, to be strong and striking enough to serve as a motive of credibility for the world.

And not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in me.

That they all may be one, as thou, Father, in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

And the glory which thou hast given me, I have given to them: that they may be one, as we also are one.

I in them, and thou in me: that they may be made perfect in one: and the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved them, as thou also hast loved me.<sup>2</sup>

The most fatal mistake which Catholics can make in dealing with the teachings and the commands of Christ is to take His words as other than sincere and meaningful. Those who protest (always to the delight of those outside the fold) against group-consciousness and group-solidarity within the Church of God, and who frown upon that love and enthusiasm for the Church which result in answers to charges made against it, would seem to have fallen into this error. They seem not to realize that the Catholic Church is *truly* the house or the family of God, and that a special affection for the society itself and for the members of the society is incumbent upon every person who is privileged to dwell within that house. If a man takes Our Lord's teachings about the Catholic Church seriously, it will be absolutely impossible for him not to have a vigorous and manifest family loyalty to this society and to its members.

<sup>1</sup> John 13: 34-35.

<sup>2</sup> John 17: 20-23.

## SINCERITY AND POLEMIC

The men who wring their hands over what they regard as the aggressiveness of contemporary Catholic polemics seem to imply that sincerity on the part of one of the Church's opponents should automatically forbid any response to that opponent which might possibly hurt his feelings. Such an attitude stems from the wildest sort of confusion. Ordinarily, at any rate, Catholic polemics is in no way concerned with sincerity or the lack of it on the part of the opponent of the Church. The enemy of the Church may be said to be sincere in the event that he actually believes as true the charges which he brings against the Catholic Church. The answer to those erroneous charges, bringing enlightenment on the particular point on which he has deviated from truth, is just as much a favor to the enemy of the Church as it is to anyone else. Writing in 1520, James Latomus described his and his University's attitude towards Martin Luther, and thus gave quite clearly the ideal attitude of distinction between a man and his work in the business of controversy. He is discussing the Louvain condemnation of Luther's writings.

That he [Martin Luther] is said to be a good man is of no concern to us at all. We have not said that he is an evil man. But, whatever sort of man he may be, it is evident that he has written things which are not good. We have not condemned him, but his errors. It was useless to warn him privately when his books, scattered over the world, made it clear that he would pay no attention to a warning.<sup>3</sup>

It is always amusing to read a liberal Catholic's protest against what he regards as a too forceful presentation of the Catholic case against the Church's detractors in our own times. Generally such protest carries with it an appeal to return to the "gentle" apologetic of the New Testament and of the primitive Christian writers. Patently such a notion would never occur to a man who was at all familiar with the bitter denunciation of the scribes and of the pharisees recorded in the Gospels or with the uncompromising firmness of the Epistle to the Galatians and of the Apocalypse. St. Justin Martyr, sometimes held up as an example for gentleness in Catholic polemic, taught that Marcion's effectiveness as a

<sup>3</sup> The *Epistola dedicatoria* to the work *Contra articulos quosdam Martini Lutheri a Theologis Lovaniensibus damnatos*, in the *Opera omnia* (Louvain, 1579), p. 1r.

propagandist was to be attributed to devils.<sup>4</sup> In any event, if there is one defect from which the Catholic Church does not suffer today, it is an over-aggressive attitude on the part of its literary defenders. A warning against such an attitude will most certainly do no good to the Church, even though it has the effect of endearing the man who makes it to the enemies of the Church.

If we are to deal at all effectively with the present-day crop of attacks against the Church, it is imperative that we should know and appreciate not only the actual charges and assertions made by the Church's enemies, but also the background or the source behind the individual attack. When a man claims that the Church or the hierarchy is seeking too much power, it is impossible to offer a reasonable response to this claim until we see the particular error which has inspired this assertion. Important attacks in this direction are made against the Church in our own time by Communists, by Protestants, by Anglicans, by members of dissident oriental groups, by those called Jehovah's Witnesses, and by persons who claim no affiliation other than that of liberalism. In every case, however, the motive for the charge is somewhat different, and an effective answer to the allegation will demand a knowledge of that motive.

## THE COMMUNIST POSITION

The fact and the articulateness of the Communist attack against the Catholic Church are too well known to require comment. It is a rare week when the columns of the *New York Times* do not recount some fresh denunciation of the Church on the part of some Moscow journal or speaker. Furthermore the suppression of the Church in Russia, as well as the persecution of Catholics in those countries which have fallen under Bolshevik domination since the war shows that Communist opposition to Catholicism is not something merely academic in character. The reasons why Communists are unalterably opposed to the true Church of Jesus Christ are found in both the theory and the practice of Communism.

In the *Divini Redemptoris* Pope Pius XI delivered, once and for all, the devastating exposé of the communistic theory. He found it a system of materialistic and hopeless tyranny, concealed under the false messianic ideal of justice, of equality, and of fraternity

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *First Apology*, cap. 26.

in labor. He indicated the cynical promise of a classless society which the communistic leaders held out to their dupes. Since the very philosophy upon which the theory of Communism is constructed is itself based upon the denial of God, Pope Pius XI showed how the communistic society is naturally and as it were instinctively hostile to the Catholic Church, the one organization on earth which is visibly, effectively, and enthusiastically devoted to the worship of the one true God.

The actually existing Communist state, however, throws far more light than any mere Marxian theory on the reason why the Communists are so bitterly hostile to the Catholic Church. Russia, the actual Communist Empire, is a nation of slaves, dominated by a Communist Czar and held in check by a swarm of spies. As far as the Communists are concerned, the only satisfactory subject is a man who thinks like a slave. For that reason, the Catholic Church, which possesses and which dispenses the high freedom which comes from the truth of God, can never be other than eminently unsatisfactory to the Communists.

For the achievement of its object, the Communist party relies on vigorous persecution where it is able to do so, and upon a no less vigorous rhetoric elsewhere. We would look in vain in communistic literature for anything like a series of logical objections to the Catholic position. The Communists know themselves, their ideals, and their limitations far too well to attempt anything of the sort. They set out to use words, not to bring knowledge, but to establish attitudes. They parade their catch-phrases in order, if possible, to weaken the loyalty of Catholics for their Church and for the leaders of that Church, and to make the Church appear unpleasant to those outside the fold.

To deal successfully with the objections made against the Church from Communist sources, we must point out the real meaning of the theory which underlies the Communist mentality. Then, with all the resources at our command, we must bring men to look and see what Communism has actually done. If those who are troubled by charges against the Church emanating from Communist circles can be brought to realize the truth that the Church is being attacked precisely because it stands in the way of a campaign which actually tends towards the enslavement and the degradation of mankind, then a good start will have been made in the direction of answering Communist propaganda.

Still, manifesting the evils of Communism is only one section of our work for Catholic truth. The main part of this task consists in bringing out the fact that the benefits which the Communists, either gullibly or cynically, as the case may be, claim that their system will give to the human race, are to be found in reality, in an ineffably higher degree, in the message of God preached infallibly by the Catholic Church. This, and this alone, is the truth which makes men free.

#### THE PROTESTANT POSITION

The Communist attacks the Catholic Church because this society definitely stands in the way of the sort of all-out obedience to Mr. Stalin which the Communist properly regards as essential to his purpose. The Protestant, on the other hand, is hostile to the Church because it seems to go beyond what he considers necessary for adherence to Our Lord. The statements of those solemn gentlemen who spend so much of their time in parading up the steps to the dwelling at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. in order to demand the recall of Mr. Myron Taylor from Vatican City are, in a way, perfectly consistent with the essential Protestant religious position. So are the somewhat hysterical articles which so frequently adorn the pages of the *Christian Century*. The absolute falsity of their demands and their statements can only be appreciated in the light of their basic attitudes.

The specifically Protestant opposition to the true Church of Jesus Christ stems from a mistaken notion about the nature of Christianity. Like the Catholic, the Protestant wills to be a follower, a disciple, of Our Lord. The very basis, however, of Protestantism as such is to be found in its teaching about the way in which this attachment to Our Lord is to be achieved. The one common element in the teaching of the Lutherans and of the Calvinists which has been accepted without question by all of their various followers (and which, incidentally, has served to confuse certain untheological Catholic writers as well) is the illusion that a man becomes in the primary and proper sense of the term a follower or a disciple of Christ, a Christian, through the possession of some internal quality, an interest in or sympathy with Our Lord. The original Protestant groups insisted that this quality be either the possession of the state of grace or of what we might call the charism of predestination. Their later followers

seem, at any rate, to attach the name of Christian to any person who wishes, in some way or another, to follow the example or to accept the teaching of Christ.

In the theory of Protestantism membership in a religious society is definitely and necessarily a secondary concern. Thus for the Protestant, or for the man with a Protestant mentality, the word "Christian" becomes a term something like "philatelist." A man is classified as a stamp collector by the fact that he is interested in this avocation and works at it. Membership in any one of the numerous organizations devoted to the pursuance of philately is in no wise requisite, even though it be desirable.

On the other hand, the Catholic truth on this matter is that the word "Christian" is one which primarily designates a member of an organization. Thus "Christian" is a word analogous to "soldier" rather than to "stamp collector." A man is designated as a soldier, not by the fact that he is interested in military maneuvers, nor by reason of his sympathy with the objectives and the methods of some particular army. He is a soldier only if he is enrolled in a definite organization, a part of a definite army. In exactly the same way the Acts of the Apostles and the other books of the New Testament, as well as the constant tradition of authentic and orthodox Christian writing, show us that a man is properly a Christian only when he is enrolled as a member of that organized society into which Our Lord formed His disciples.

In the time intervening between Our Lord's ascension into heaven and the first Christian Pentecost there were no disciples or followers of Christ other than those who were gathered around the apostles and placed under the command of St. Peter. When the three thousand accepted St. Peter's teaching on that Pentecost and wished to become followers of Christ, they had no recourse other than to be baptized and enrolled as fellow members with the original disciples in that society into which the original disciples had already been organized. Only thus were they saved from "this perverse generation" and brought into the company of Christ.<sup>5</sup> The members of this society and only these members were designated as Christians in the city of Antioch.<sup>6</sup> Only such members have a proper right to that designation today.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Acts 2:40.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Acts 11:26.

This is the point from which any effective answer to typically Protestant charges against the Catholic Church must proceed. When Protestant religious leaders attack the Church for seeking too much power, they merely act on the mistaken supposition that the true and visible Church of Jesus Christ should operate according to the schedule drawn up for their type of religious association. Their bigotry proceeds from ignorance, but from ignorance chiefly of the one essential point that association with Christ is only to be achieved, according to His divine will, in the organized society within which He dwells and over which He presides.

#### THE LIBERAL APPROACH

The "Liberal" religious position with reference to the Catholic Church is a development of the Protestant approach. Where the Protestant imagines that association with Our Lord is to be achieved primarily and essentially by means of some sympathy with or interest in Him, and thus believes that all religious societies nominally devoted to Christ are objectively entitled to be considered on the same footing, the "Liberal" theoretically accords the same recognition to any kind of religious organization whatsoever. Where the Protestant wishes to be a follower of Christ, the "Liberal" simply wants to be religious. Likewise, then, where the Protestant is prone to object against the Catholic Church because it claims to be *the* Christian religious society, the "Liberal" is prepared to assail it because it professes to be *the* society necessary for the salvation of men, teaching God's message infallibly and authoritatively. It is the claim of truth itself, the assertion of the fact that the Church is the one necessary and infallible religious society, which makes the Church anathema to the "Liberal."

The "Liberal" dislike of any claim that a religious organization possesses unique divine authority is well conveyed in the now famous words of Mr. Clyde Miller in his "Introduction" to *The Story of the Springfield Plan*. He is speaking of the four "delusions" which are to be eliminated by the Plan.

The first is the delusion that one's own church, cult, sect, or group alone expresses God's will on earth, that it alone can reveal God's purposes toward mankind. We have seen this delusion in the Shintoism

of Japan, in Emperor worship. The Emperor is divine, and treason against the nation is blasphemy against God. But this delusion has not been confined to the Japanese.<sup>7</sup>

In a letter published in *America* Mr. Miller insisted that he did not have the Catholic Church in mind when he was writing these lines.<sup>8</sup> He was thinking, he said, of the attitudes of some of his non-Catholic co-religionists, and he saw in the "delusion" he had described the basis of all bigotry.

To be true to this "Liberal" attitude, a man cannot even face the possibility that there might be one society commissioned and guided by God Himself to deliver His message to mankind. He must not distinguish between the status of the Protestant, who, in making the claim of a unique mission from God and of necessity for his own religious society, is obviously going beyond the teaching of his society itself, and the status of the Catholic who, in asserting that his Church is the one authentic, infallible, and necessary Church of God, is merely stating the dogma of his Church and is stating a fact. Such a "Liberal" remains what he is only through the vigorous exercise of keeping his eyes firmly closed against the evidence of truth.

The "Liberal" attitude towards the Catholic Church is nowhere better revealed than in a document issued previous to the American entry into the recent war, and signed by seventeen of the most authentic "Liberals."

No apologetic is needed for the greatness of the Roman Church or for the glory of its achievements in piloting Western man through the Dark Ages. But its catholicity was severely curtailed by its constant temptation to commit the basic error of identifying the Church as a temporal kingdom with the "Kingdom of God" of Christian and prophetic expectation. This error invests the sociologically relative architecture of the Church with an unwarranted aura of unqualified holiness. An ecclesiastical institution buffeted by the vicissitudes of the centuries, conditioned by the mutation of social and political forces, subject to the corruptions which assail all institutions, claims an absoluteness of

<sup>7</sup> *The Story of the Springfield Plan*, by Clarence I. Chatto and Alice L. Halligan (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1945), p. xv. The passage cited is from Mr. Miller's Introduction. An excellent Catholic appreciation of this passage and of the book as a whole will be found in Dr. Edmond Darvill Benard's "The 'Meaning' of the Springfield Plan," in *The American Ecclesiastical Review*, CXIV, 1 (Jan. 1946), pp. 1-12.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *America*, LXXV, 2 (Apr. 13, 1946), p. 39.

eneration which is incompatible with its relativity in history. The historical usurps the sanctity of the eternal.<sup>9</sup>

Blithely oblivious of the fact that it was Our Lord Himself who spoke in the same terms of His Church and of the Kingdom of Heaven,<sup>10</sup> and of the central mystery of the Church, which consists in the fact that an historical and organized society in which good and bad members will be mingled together until the end of time really is the society in which alone man finds the fellowship of Christ, the embattled signers proceed to more of the same. The Church is warned that "its *Syllabus of Errors* (1864), the start of a Second Counter-Reformation challenging the liberal world that had risen from Reformation and Renaissance, played into the hands of political and social obscurantism."<sup>11</sup> Finally, all qualified Catholics are summoned to the sacred duties of laicism. The Holy Father must not, according to *The City of Man*, speak out and expect to be followed in any matter where politics are concerned.

Freedom-loving, justice-loving Catholics—here as well as in the Latin-American republics and wherever else they can reawaken to the examples bequeathed by braver ages—will see to it some day that humility in faith be no longer the lure to servility in politics and that allegiance to the City of God be disentangled again from bondage to Vatican City as a foreign potentate in feud or trade with other potentates.<sup>12</sup>

*The City of Man* is particularly valuable for a study of the "Liberal" attitude towards and hostility against the Catholic Church because, unlike other documents emanating from similar sources, it proceeds to the logical implications of the "Liberal" position. Men like Messrs. Van Wyck Brooks, Hans Kohn, and Reinhold Niebuhr (to mention only the best known among the signers of *The City of Man*), are almost hysterically angry with the Church for claiming "an absoluteness of veneration." *The City of Man* informs us that these "Liberals" have a kind of religion for which they claim the same thing. This is "the religion of the Spirit, to which all men are witnesses,"<sup>13</sup> "the common

<sup>9</sup> *The City of Man. A Declaration on World Democracy* (New York: The Viking Press, 1941), pp. 40 f.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *Math.* 16: 18-19.

<sup>11</sup> *The City of Man*, p. 41.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

belief of man."<sup>14</sup> It would seem that "The latter [the common belief of man] explains and annexes all dogmas as symbols; the churches, in the fetters of literalism, anathematize as heresy and error the symbolical meaning that is the dogma's inmost truth."<sup>15</sup> It is "the common creed, which embraces and interprets every lesser faith."<sup>16</sup>

The new supreme Religion of the Seventeen is already existent and ready to take over.

This common creed already exists; toward its luminous center all higher minds [those of the signers of course] already point, from whatever distant horizon they may set out. The yoke of this creed is as easy as it is inevitable; its doctrines are as plain as they are undebatable. It teaches that a divine intention governs the universe—be it called God or Deity or the Holy Ghost or the Absolute or Logos or even Evolution.<sup>17</sup>

To sustain their attitudes towards the Church's claims of necessity and infallibility, "Liberals" have recourse to such bizarre accounts of the origin of Christianity as that contained in Lewis Browne's *This Believing World*. That Our Lord had been captured by the Jews while He was trying to escape from them,<sup>18</sup> that the disciples only imagined that He had risen from the dead,<sup>19</sup> that they "even declared that they had actually seen him in the act of rising from the sepulcher,"<sup>20</sup> that they had invented the genealogies and "those extravagant legends concerning the conception, birth, childhood, and ministry of Jesus,"<sup>21</sup> that St. Paul was the real founder of Christianity,<sup>22</sup> all of these patent historical absurdities are treated reverently and received as learning in order that the Church may be depicted in the guise in which the "Liberals" wish to see it.

The only really effective way to handle the charges which are made against the Church by those of the "Liberal" camp is to

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 46 f.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. *This Believing World* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941), p. 270.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 273.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 276.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 283.

insist upon an examination of the most fundamental religious truths, those which are set forth in the science of Christian apologetics. This course, it must be admitted, is not particularly easy. The "Liberal" has a way of shying away from hard facts. He may, for instance, speak about the study of religion as something like an effort "To gain an understanding of the need for religion in the life of ancient man and in succeeding groups as an attempt to account for things which men could not understand, and as an attempt to get harmonious living conditions."<sup>23</sup> In dealing with a man who works on this assumption, it is the duty of the Catholic teacher to bring out the fact that the Catholic religion is nothing of the sort. It is most certainly not an attempt to account for phenomena which men did not understand prior to modern research in electricity and in medicine. Most certainly it is not a mere attempt to gain better and more harmonious living conditions. What it is, and what it claims to be, is the worship of the one true God, according to the directions which He has given to us through His divine Son. On that standard, and on that alone, can the Catholic religion be intelligently discussed.

#### THE POSITION OF THE EASTERN DISSIDENTS AND OF THE ANGLICANS

In dealing with the objections and charges raised against the true Church by members of the dissident oriental communions, we must distinguish sharply between the theory of these groups and their actual procedure. In theory their position towards the Catholic Church is very much like that of the High Church Anglicans. In practice, at the hands of men like the Patriarch Alexei, their opposition is simply that of the Communist party line. The unfortunates who chose to gather around the Sacred Emperor rather than around the Vicar of Christ have found that the Emperor is now no less a personage than Comrade Stalin.

The basic High Church Anglican (and incidentally the theoretical Eastern Orthodox) position with reference to the Church is something quite different from that of any of those groups we have mentioned previously. Like the Protestants and the Cath-

<sup>23</sup> This is the first of the "specific objectives" in the Springfield Plan's study outline for the eighth grade course, *Democratic Procedures. The Contributions of Religions to Present Democratic Procedures*. It is found on page 2 of the mimeographed outline. It is interesting to note that Browne's *This Believing World* is listed (p. 16) in the bibliography for teachers presenting this course.

olics, the Anglicans profess themselves as desirous of being in the fellowship of Christ. Like the Catholics, and unlike the Protestants, the High Church Anglicans hold that this fellowship is to be found within the visible society founded by Our Lord. The authoritative *Doctrine in the Church of England* speaks of "The life of the Church as visible and militant here in earth."<sup>24</sup> The brilliant Oxonian scholar, Professor Cuthbert Hamilton Turner, wrote that "We stand, in the first place, on the idea of a Church, a visible Church, a Catholic Church: and there is only one Catholic Church conceivable, the Church which has been from the beginning."<sup>25</sup> Dr. H. Burn-Murdoch of Cambridge teaches that "The new Ekklesia of the Lord, thus rebuilt upon the old Ekklesia of Israel, is to be a society recognizable in the world both collectively and individually."<sup>26</sup>

The Rev. W. Norman Pittenger of the General Theological Seminary in New York has given a most explicit American statement of the Anglican position.

"No Christian who is not also a member of the church . . ." In that brief phrase, the witness of the New Testament—and, in fact, the testimony of early Christianity as a whole—may be summed up. With most varying phrasing, and likewise with widely differing emphases, the New Testament makes it clear that the way in which one became a Christian believer, in primitive times, and hence a participant in the Christian life, was by becoming a member of the Christian society.<sup>27</sup>

The institution which can produce men who write so accurately about the visible nature of the Church of Christ in this world differs from the true Church basically by reason of its unwillingness to acknowledge the Holy Father's primacy of jurisdiction within the Church of God and his doctrinal infallibility. The objections of this group, unlike those of the "Liberals," are set forth against a background of genuine and serious scholarship. In their most perfect expression, these objections are presented in Dr. Jalland's famous book, *The Church and the Papacy*.

<sup>24</sup> *Doctrine in the Church of England. The Report of the Commission on Christian Doctrine appointed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York in 1922* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge; New York: The Macmillan Co., 1938), p. 104.

<sup>25</sup> *Catholic and Apostolic* (London and Oxford: A. R. Mowbray and Co.; Milwaukee: Morehouse Publishing Co., 1931), p. 111.

<sup>26</sup> *Church, Continuity and Unity* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1945), p. 22.

<sup>27</sup> *His Body the Church* (New York: Morehouse-Gorham Co., 1945), p. 1.

Dr. Jalland and the cause which he represents are not afraid of the evidence. They bring out and examine the documents and the pronouncements which are most pertinent to the theses on which they differ from the Catholic Church. The service which we can do for Our Lord in their regard is to master that evidence and to indicate the theological elements which they have not considered sufficiently in bringing in their decision.

They begin with the absolutely correct notion of a glorious Church, a visible society of the disciples of Christ which is to act and to live as His Body in the world. They acknowledge the almost innumerable occasions upon which the Roman Pontiff has *de facto* claimed and exercised supreme jurisdiction within the Church and given *de facto* doctrinal decisions from which there was no appeal. They acknowledge the supremacy of Peter among the apostles, and know that the Bishop of Rome is his successor. The objections which they offer will lose their force once they are brought to understand that the Church cannot really be what they claim it is unless the successor of Peter be actually endowed with the full primacy of jurisdiction and with true doctrinal infallibility.

A visible Church without a true visible ruler could not possibly be the *one* Body of Christ. A doctrinal Church without an infallible and visible head could not be infallible, and could not be the society within which Our Lord resides.

#### THE ATTACKS FROM JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

The attacks made against the Catholic Church by the members of this particular organization make up in ardor what they lack in coherence. Nevertheless, it is important to know what their basic stand towards the Church really is.

The Witnesses, like the Catholics themselves, and like the High Church Anglicans, are firm believers in a visible society of Christians. They conceive themselves to be the true Church, and they have appropriated from some source or other a certain amount of genuine Christian doctrine to explain their stand.

They hold that the true Church, the *Theocracy*, is in opposition to the world, presided over by the prince of this world, Satan.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>28</sup> A recent discussion of this phase of the Jehovah's Witness doctrine will be found in the article "The 'World' Concept among Jehovah's Witnesses," by Theodore W. Sprague in *The Harvard Theological Review*, XXXIX, 2 (April, 1946), pp. 109 ff.

In this, of course, they are perfectly correct. Their mistake consists in believing that their society is empowered to speak in the name of God. The act of speaking without authorization in the name of God is the crime of the false prophet. That offense is doubled when the false prophet presumes to denounce what is the true City of God. The priest who is called upon to deal with these people can remind them that the status which they imagine themselves to possess would actually be theirs in the genuine City of God which is the Catholic Church.

## CONCLUSION

The people who make these attacks against the Church and those who are victimized by these attacks stand in terrible and obvious need of that divine truth which only the Church can give. The outstanding apostolic work in our country and in our day must inevitably be the effort on the part of our priests to present that divine teaching with perfect accuracy, precisely as it is conserved and taught in the infallible magisterium of the Catholic Church, and yet clearly and effectively, in the language of our own people, so that all may be in a position to recognize its truth, its beauty, and its desirability.

This apostolic and theological work is necessarily a corporate affair. No individual man, however brilliant, will manage it successfully. The American priests must work together, generously acknowledging and using each other's contributions in the direction of a more effective presentation of Christian doctrine and building upon these contributions. The recent formation of the Catholic Theological Society of America has made it perfectly clear that the need for such co-operation in the teaching of Catholic truth is generally recognized. If we are to accomplish the apostolic work God has given us to do, we must follow the injunction St. Paul laid upon our predecessors, that we "stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, laboring together for the faith of the gospel."<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Phil. 1:27.

## Answers to Questions

## THE "RELIGIOUS BOOK LIST" AGAIN

*Question:* A "religious book list" has recently been published by the National Conference of Christians and Jews. What should be the attitude of Catholics toward such a list, and what would be its practical use as far as Catholics are concerned?

*Answer:* The subject of the "religious book list" issued by the Conference of Christians and Jews was discussed at some length in a previous issue of *The American Ecclesiastical Review* (CXIII, 5 [Nov. 1945], 385 ff.). Since that time a new list has appeared, containing the names of some more recent publications. As was stated before, the impression naturally given when three classes of books—Protestant, Catholic and Jewish—are listed in a single pamphlet is that it is quite commendable for the adherents of each of these three denominational groups to read the books which explain and defend the religious beliefs of the other two. Now, this would be strictly forbidden to Catholics as far as a considerable number of books on the Jewish and Protestant lists are concerned (apart from special permission). Hence it is difficult to see what advantage to Catholics there is in a catalogue of Jewish and Protestant publications. On the contrary, such a list might be an incentive to violate the rules which the Catholic Church, in her capacity of defender of the Christian faith, has wisely laid down for the spiritual protection of her children.

Worthy of note in this more recent list, among the so-called "goodwill books," is a work entitled *Garibaldi, Knight of Liberty*, by Jean Burton. A note tells us that it is intended for children between the ages of twelve and sixteen. The Foreword of the pamphlet states that the "goodwill books" were chosen by a Protestant, Catholic and Jewish Committee and are recommended to all. Now, in the biography of Garibaldi we read the statement that throughout Italy (including the Papal States) in the early part of the nineteenth century there was not the "slightest trace of freedom of speech, press, religion or assembly. . . . Nine out of ten of the people could neither read nor write. Food was scarce and dear, and the rulers ground the last cent of taxes from the starving people" (p. 6). The work also states that "Pope Gregory