

**WHY SHOULD
PRIESTS WED?**

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Why should priests wed? by J. C.

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By J. C.



"So dear to heaven is saintly chastity
That, where a soul is found sincerely so,
A thousand liveried angels lacky her."

New York:
A. E. COSTELLO.

1883.

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PREFACE.

This book would never, in all probability, have been published, were it not for the recent appearance of an immoral and untruthful work compiled by a Protestant minister, who has plenty of capital at his back to circulate his slanderous brochure. Therefore this task was undertaken, in the cause of truth and morality, and without the slightest suggestion from any ecclesiastic.

The subject of clerical celibacy has been many times handled by priests and laymen who have been as distinguished for their learning as they have been remarkable for their piety. In these pages will be found a clear, concise statement of the case. We have not written the book for controversialists, or for any particular class in the community, but for the public generally. Our object has been to satisfy inquirers who have not the leisure or the opportunity to peruse bulky volumes.

Unlike our opponents, we have given our authorities for every statement we have made, and we have asserted nothing at second hand. Time and again the teachings of the Catholic Church have been reviled and maliciously misrepresented. Charges the most libellous and atrocious have been made against that divine institution which has been the bulwark of civilization—charges

which bring their own refutation, and which no intelligent mind could receive or believe. The main intention of such opponents has been to inflame the people against the Catholic Church, and not to ascertain where error lies or in what consists the truth.

This book appeals to the people. It is written for the people. Our researches have been conducted with patience and sincerity, to bring together all that has been honestly urged against the practices of clerical celibacy and confession, and all that it is necessary to state in favor of those practices for the impartial consideration of the public.

Clerical celibacy and confession have ever been the especial objects of Protestant attacks. But the same amount of talent and the like honesty of purpose have not been exercised in making the attacks as in meeting them. The brightest and keenest intellects of Christendom have cultivated the science of moral theology, bringing to the task years and years of previous study of Holy Scripture, canon law, dogmatic theology, and the whole circle of human knowledge. Thousands and thousands of such commentaries have already appeared, and he would be rash indeed who would insolently style all this great labor "ridiculous study." As to Confession, if the laws of the Church and the exhortations of theologians be observed, nothing can be conceived more conducive to spiritual progress than that Sacrament.

We have largely quoted from Protestant writers to sustain our proposition that clerical celibacy is ab-

olutely necessary to the welfare and purity of any religion. We have given high historical authorities for the fact that all nations in all times have recognized its efficacy. The Russian, the Greek, and the Protestant Churches, by rejecting the practice, have lowered the standard of morality in the countries in which they prevail, and we have proved it by citations from the works of impartial witnesses.

We have regretfully printed the last chapter, because the contemplation of the frailties of human nature is saddening. Our adversaries, however, have challenged us pointedly in this respect, and in answering it we have departed from the rule of our abler predecessors. But it is the truth, and such a terrible array of facts ought to make our enemies forever hold their peace.

In the last published work we have referred to as attacking the Catholic religion through its priestly celibacy and its confessional, the reverend author quotes only a few instances of unchastity, and these are threadbare examples. When a man puts on the clerical garb, he does not at the same time put on infallibility or impeccability. But that garb ought to make him better than other men. We have proven everywhere, but most conclusively in the last chapter, that there is far less to be said against the Catholic priest who is a celibate, than there is against his Protestant ministerial brother who is married.

J. C.

March, 1888.

