

THE MAN IN TROUBLE.

... but Dodd's ... cured it.

His Feet Again— ... simple, Natural and

... Oct. 11.—(Spe- ... and permanent- ... that Hugh Aber- ... resident of ... among his

... from Rheumatism ... joints." Mr. ... "My muscles ... could not sleep ... headaches. I took ... but nothing ... I tried Dodd's ... boxes put me on

... taken Mr. Aber- ... Dodd's Kid- ... found in their ... reliable Canadian ... or Dodd's Kidney ... and other ... and the "Kid- ... kidneys keep the ... impurities. And ... such as uric acid ... cannot have such ... diseases as ... Lumbago and Heart Dis-

... strong and ... Kidney Pills and ... and, wet days of ... of rheumatism.

... y Unbelief."

... of my wonder- ... have seen ... arise, ... evil sore had

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Converted Married Ministers and the Priesthood.

Should Converted Married Ministers be Allowed to Retain Their Wives and Become Priests?

(Louis O'Donovan, D.D., in the Catholic World for October.)

Several months ago fifteen non-Catholic ministers, almost simultaneously, "went over to Rome," and the belief obtains in high places that very many more would soon follow were they, being married men, allowed to become priests and keep their wives. To them, therefore, if not also to us, it cannot be an uninteresting question whether or not the Church should offer such terms to these "other sheep." And when we recall that not many years ago in England, a minister brought his whole congregation with him when he came into the Catholic Church, one may fancy the proportions that might be assumed by a tidal wave "homewards" were the dyke of priestly celibacy allowed to sink before the sea of prospective homecoming ministers on both sides of the Atlantic.

The question is not, of course, whether or not celibacy is to be maintained as a sine qua non for the clergy in general. Neither is it whether or not converted ministers shall be allowed to marry after being ordained priests. But whether or not non-Catholic ministers already married may continue to live with their wives.

Further, it is not intended here to discuss the probable gain in numbers by lay accretions from the various non-Catholic sects, were such a step taken. Neither shall we question whether such expected converts would prefer as guides, confessors and directors, their one-time married non-Catholic ministers and their then married Catholic priests—whose time and means must then necessarily be divided between family and flock—or whether they would rather be directed and led by life-long celibate priests.

We leave aside also the question of probable shock and its scandalous consequences, in gravity and numbers, were such news borne to the ears of the Catholic faithful. And this even though it were explained to be only an exceptional, extraordinary case of the Church becoming "all things to all men in order that (she) might save all" (1. Cor. ix. 22).

We also pass by the probability of non-Catholic laymen or ministers, who contemplate entering the Church and the priesthood, taking advantage of this relaxation to marry before entering upon their studies for the priesthood. Finally, we do not raise the issue whether married Catholic laymen would, or would not, ask that they, the children to the manor born, be accorded equal privileges with outsiders, and, at least, material heretics, should they wish to become priests.

HISTORIC PRECEDENT.

Cutting off all these questions, interesting and important though they are, the question of historic precedent only is here considered; namely, what has been the Church's practice in the past in such a situation—quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus. Nor shall we consider what individuals have asserted as their personal convictions, even though it should be a St. Jerome asking: "What is practised by the Churches of the Orient? What by those of Egypt and the Apostolic See?" and then answering: "For they receive either virgin or continent clerics; or if their clerics had wives, they cease to be married." No matter if it be a Pope St. Gregory the Great writing to his Subdeacon Peter in Sicily that: "It seems good to me that from the present day all bishops be notified not to presume to make any one a subdeacon unless he has promised to live chastely. . . . But those who, after the prohibition, will not live apart from their wives, we do not wish to receive Holy Orders."

Leaving aside all these ancillary questions, we shall consider only more or less general laws, formulated by early synods, that is, during the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries, in both the east and the west. Let some be shocked by statements hereinafter made, let them bear in mind that laws are made for the worst, the relatively few, and are no indication of the moral status of the generally good. They should not lose sight of our Lord's own warning, "that scandals needs must come"; that even among the Twelve Apostles one fell afoul of the most fundamental law. And then, too, it should not be forgotten that these synodal canons that we are about to review were formulated in reconstruction days, times when to be dealt with—men who had broken through many laws, human and divine, and who needed the healing physic, or even, at times, the cutting scalpel of the Divine Physician, as well as the self-sacrificing nursing of Holy Mother Church, to bring them back to a sanitary, spiritual condition. This much premised, we may take up the main inquiry.

In the year 305 (Hefele, History of Church Councils, Book I, sec. 18, Ed. Clark, Edinb., 1894), in Antiochian Spain, surely nineteen, possibly forty-three, bishops gathered and held the Synod of Elvira, for the purpose of reconstruction after the persecutions of the preceding three centuries. Of the eighty-one canons, the thirty-third orders: "Bi-

shops, priests, and deacons and all clerics in the ministry to separate from their wives and not beget children" (Hefele, Councils, Book I, sec. 13). Here is the first synodal legislation on celibacy, and the note struck is quite clear and to our point, showing no uncertainty or compromise in Spain, at least in the early fourth century, and implying that the same had always been in vogue, at least generally, if not indeed, universally.

COUNCIL RECTIFIES ERRORS.

Not ten years later, in 314, near where the Rhone debouches into the Mediterranean, a great number of bishops, estimated variously at from thirty-three to six hundred, from all the provinces of Constantine's Empire, held the great Council of Arles. Its purpose was to rectify abuses that had arisen from the Donatist schism. And while it was not an oecumenical council, yet it has been called a general council of the West. In its last canon (sixth or twenty-ninth) it declares: "We exhort our brothers (that priests and deacons do not live with their wives, because they are occupied with daily ministrations" (Hefele, Councils, sec. 15). The tone of legislation embodied in this canon, it will be noticed, is less imperative than that of Elvira, and it embraces the sentiment of a far vaster part of the Church—all the West.

This same year, 314 (Hefele, Council, Book I, sec. 16), a smaller number of bishops, variously put down as from twelve to eighteen, met at Ancyra in Asia Minor, to re-adjust matters there after "the persecutions. The tenth of the twenty-five canons formulated was: "If deacons, at the time of their appointment (election), declare that they must marry, and that they accordingly, they marry, they may continue in their ministry, because the bishop (at the time of their institution) gave them leave to marry; but if at the time of their election they have not spoken, and have agreed in taking holy orders to lead a celibate life, and if later they marry, they shall lose their diaconate" (Hefele, Councils, sec. 16). Here is still greater leniency in words yet the wording implies that as a general thing it was assumed by the very fact of ordination that the candidate intended celibacy, and should he wish to marry he must so declare before receiving deaconship. It should be noted, though, that there is question only of the diaconate, and that nothing is said of the priesthood.

Of priests who marry after ordination, the Synod of Neo-Caesarea, in Cappadocia, Asia Minor, held byca and that of Nicea in 325, between the date of this Synod of Ancyra, in its first of fifteen canons, that: "If a priest marry, he shall be removed from the ranks of the clergy" (Hefele, Book I, sec. 17) and therefore, we interpret the mind of Ancyra by the text of Neo-Caesarea, so near in time and space, Ancyra would forbid all married life for priests.

So far, then, legislation in the West and East forbids priests to live with their wives. In the East, it is true, while saying nothing explicitly of priests already married who remain with their wives, the legislation positively forbids both priests and deacons to marry after ordination, and, by implication, forbids priests already married to live with their wives.

NICAEA PASSES LAW.

One naturally desires to know what legislation on celibacy was passed at Nicea. Here, in Asia, seventy-five miles southeast of the present Constantinople, the first truly oecumenical council met, A.D. 325, and over three hundred bishops were present. The third of the twenty canons says: "The great synod absolutely forbids, and it cannot be permitted to either bishops, priests, or any other cleric, to have in his house a sunesaktos (subintroducta), with the exception of his mother, sister, aunt, or such other persons as are free from all suspicion" (Hefele, sec. 42). But what does the term subintroducta mean? Does this forbid "spiritual" marriages, real marriages, or does it forbid all women but the true wives? Each opinion has its supporters (Hefele, loc. cit.). And hence the Fathers of Nicea are not clear, for us at least, on this point whatever they might have been for themselves.

At Rome, in 386, eighty bishops met in synod and declared: "We advise that the priests and levites should not live with their wives" (Canon 9, Hefele, Book VIII, sec. 105). This expression "advised" is explained as no retrogression but as meaning that priests are advised to observe what is already a law and no new legislation. At Carthage, in Africa, in 397, a synod "binds bishops, priests and levites to live apart from their wives" (Hefele, Book VIII, sec. 106). Fourteen years later, in 401, the Sixth Synod of Carthage (Canon 4) decreed: "Bishops, priests, and deacons may not live with their wives, or they will be deposed from their office. The rest of the clergy, how-

ever, are not so bound" (Hefele, Book VIII, sec. 13). Africa seems, therefore, to have stood with the West for absolute, unqualified celibacy of the priesthood.

This same year, 401, a synod at Turin addressed a synodal letter of eight canons to the Gallican bishops, and declared: "No one who has been ordained irregularly, or has begotten children while discharging the ministry of the Church, may be promoted to any higher grade" (loc. cit.). The parallel here implied between irregularity and fatherhood in the priesthood of course precludes the latter from being permitted to priests. It would seem that the Gallican bishops appealed to Rome on some points of this letter, and the next year, 402, the Synod of Rome, under Pope Innocent I., decreed among other things that: "Bishops, priests, and deacons must remain unmarried" (loc. cit., p. 114, can. 3). No doubt, therefore, seems ever to have clouded the legislation of Rome on this point.

FRANCE'S STRINGENT CANONS.

In the year 441 a synod was held at Orange, in south-eastern France, when thirty canons were formulated. The twenty-second is: "Married men shall not henceforth, be ordained deacons unless they have previously vowed chastity." The twenty-third is: "He who, after receiving ordination to the diaconate, shall live with his wife, shall be deposed." Yet, in a more indulgent strain, the twenty-fourth declares: "Those, however, who at an earlier period (before the passing of this law) were ordained deacons, and have fallen back into married intercourse, are excepted from this punishment. But, in accordance with the decrees of the Synod of Turin, they must not be advanced to further dignity." And canon twenty-fifth is: "Persons twice married, in case they are received into the number of the clergy by reason of their upright conduct, shall not be advanced higher than the sub-diaconate" (Hefele, Book X, sec. 102). Hereby not only priests, but even deacons, are prohibited to have wives unless married before the law was promulgated.

The Second Synod of Arles (443 or 452) enacted fifty-six canons, the second declaring: "A married man is not to be made a priest unless his conversion (i.e., vow of chastity) has preceded" (Hefele, Book X, sec. 164). Nothing clearer, or more to the point, could be asked in our inquiry. In 461 a dozen Gallic bishops met at the Synod of Tours and passed thirteen canons, the first being: "Priests and levites are exhorted to perpetual chastity, because they may at any moment be summoned to the discharge of a sacred function—sacrifice, baptism, etc." (Hefele, sec. 211). Four years later, in 465, the Synod of Vannes, in Brittany, published sixteen canons, number 11 speaking of "Priests, deacons, subdeacons, and all those who are themselves forbidden to marry," thus taking celibacy as an established fact. Again, in southern Gaul, in A.D. 506, thirty-five bishops met at the Synod of Agde. Of the forty-seven canons received as genuine, the ninth says: "Incontinent clerics shall be deprived of all ecclesiastical dignities and offices. Only those who did not know that the continuance of married life was forbidden, may be allowed to retain their office if they live apart for the future" (Hefele, sec. 222). And canon sixteenth is: "If a young married man wishes to be ordained, he must be asked whether his wife also agrees, and is willing to depart from her husband's abode and practice continence." France, therefore, made no compromise, but demanded celibacy of all her priests. In 517, in the province of Taragona, in Spain, a synod of seven bishops decreed: "If married men are ordained, they must, from the subdeacon to the priest, not bring home live with their wives," etc. (Hefele, sec. 229). Thus Spain, too, demanded and had a celibate priesthood, and would tolerate no other.

APPEAL TO POPE.

In A.D. 535 two hundred and seventeen bishops met at Carthage, in an African general council, to reconstruct legislation and morals after the Vandal Kingdom's devastation. They discussed the question "whether those who had been Arian priests of the orthodox doctrine, after reception in their offices, should only be taken into lay communion. All the members of the synod inclined to the latter view; yet they would not decide, but resolved, unanimously, to apply to Pope John II. for guidance" (Hefele, sec. 248).

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live with their wives" (Canon I, Hefele, sec. 286). Thus Gallic synods are consistently for celibacy. COUNCILS AND SYNODS IN UNITY.

At the General Council of Toledo, held in 559, to set right the abuses resulting from Arianism in Spain, it was prescribed that: "As the bishops, priests and deacons, that have come over from heresy, still partly live in matrimony with their wives, this is now forbidden to them. Whoever does so shall be regarded as a lection" (Capitulum 5, Hefele, sec. 287). And at Saragossa, A.D. 592, a provincial synod declared: "If an Arian priest becomes a Catholic and upright, particularly if he is chaste, he may be ordained as priest anew on repentance. So also a deacon" (Canon I, Hefele, sec. 288). Finally, another Spanish synod at Huesca, A.D. 598, ordained that: "All clerics must lead a chaste life."

Summing up, therefore, we find that of these twenty-seven synods, not selected because of any biased legislation on the subject, but because they are the earliest dealing with the case, dating from reconstruction days after the terrible double catastrophe—the persecutions and the early heresies—summing up, we find that three synods were held in the east and twenty-four in the West. Of the three held in the East, the major one—that of Nicea—is apparently not clear as to the obligation of celibacy for those newly-converted who wished to exercise the priesthood. Indeed, the synod seemed to have inclined to the obligation of celibacy, but was probably, if we may hold the account historical (see Hefele, sec. 33), prevented on by Paphnutius not to forbid these newly-converted, already married, to live with their wives.

Of the two minor Eastern synods, one, Ancyra, before, if they so stipulated their wives, after ordination, but nothing is said of priests. The other, Neo-Caesarea, orders priests to be deposed if they marry. Hence, the legislation of the East, on our point, is rather in favor of celibacy, for one synod is doubtfully against obligatory celibacy, one does not deal with the case directly, and the third is for celibacy in general.

VOTE FOR A CELIBATE CLERGY. In the West eleven of the twenty-four oblige celibacy in priests, while thirteen presuppose, or imply, or exact, celibacy. One of these latter would have converted priests supported as laymen, but not made priests. It is accurate, then, to say that the early synods generally forbade converted priests retaining their wives and becoming priests. Indeed, we might say that it was decidedly the exception for such a course to be allowed. Nay, we may say that we have not one entirely trustworthy account of a synod in those three centuries, unquestionably, uncompromisingly allowing converted priests to become priests in the Catholic Church. More accurately, against the 300 who, at Nicea, probably did not vote against a married clergy, 445, or by some records, 952 (with eight synods not listed, wherein all voted for celibacy, and therefore probably from two hundred to four hundred more), all voted for a celibate clergy. Hence our conclusion is that, historically, from precedent, the Church cannot, consistently with her traditions of these three early centuries, allow converted non-Catholic ministers to become Catholic priests unless they promise to practice celibacy.

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