

who in the beginning broke away from the Church, which alone was founded by Christ, employed every means possible to blacken and the Bride of Christ. And as proof of this let it suffice to say that scholarship gone back to original sources declare that, since the Reformation, history was poisoned at its source, with the result that later generations have been nourished by lies. This accounts for the dreadful prejudice the Protestants against the Catholic Church.

I have met many non-Catholics who have told me of their firm belief in charges so damnable against Catholic teaching and practice, but if I were in their place I should hate the Church worse than they. Some of the best scholars and the highest type of manhood among Protestants have become Catholics as a result of searching for accusations against the Catholic Church. Their investigations led them to enter the very Church, which they set out to assail. That ought to be a convincing argument.

Protestant prejudice is due mainly to the falsehoods which have deluged the Protestant mind.

Let me conclude with a statement of a man who for 40 years fought the Catholic Church and sought in every way to discredit and destroy her, but who, eventually seeing the Church as she is, not as she is caricatured, embraced her, and became her defender. This statement is from the celebrated John L. Stoddard, who for 25 years was the foremost lecturer in the English-speaking world.

“When I am asked what I have found within the Catholic Church superior to all that Protestantism gave me, I find that language is inadequate to express it. One thinks of the familiar metaphor of a stained glass window in the vast cathedral. Seen from without by day, this seems to be an unintelligible mass of dusky glass. Viewed from within, however, it reveals a beautiful design, where sacred story glows resplendently in form and color. So it is with the Church of Rome. One must enter it to understand its sanctity and charm.

“When I reflect upon the Churches long, unbroken continuity, extending back to the very days of the Apostles; when I recall her grand, inspiring traditions, her blessed sacraments, her immemorial language, her changeless creed, her noble ritual, her stately ceremonies, her priceless works of art, her

wondrous unity of doctrine, her apostolic authority, her splendid role of saints and martyrs reaching up like Jacob’s ladder, and uniting earth and heaven; when I reflect upon the intercession for us of those saints and martyrs, enhanced by the petitions of the blessed Mother of our Lord; and at last not least, when I consider the abiding presence of the Savior on her altars;—I feel that this One, Holy, Apostolic Church has given me certainty for doubt, order for confusion, sunlight for darkness, and substance for shadow. It is the Bread of life, and the Wine of the soul, instead of the unsatisfying husks; the father’s welcome, with the ring and the robe, instead of the weary exile in the wilderness of doubt. It is true, the prodigal must retrace the homeward road, and even into the doorway of the mission on his knees; but, within, what a recompense!

“Favored are those who from their childhood up are nurtured in the Catholic Church, and to whom all her comforts, aids, and sacraments have come no less freely than the air and sunshine.

“I have sometimes wondered whether such favorite Catholics ever know the rapture of the homeless waif, to whom the splendors of his father’s house are suddenly revealed; the consolation of the mariner who storm tossed vessel finally attains the sheltered port; the gratitude of the lonely wanderer, long-lost in cold and darkness, who shares at last, however undeservedly, the warmth and light of God’s great spiritual home!”

Catholics are so accustomed to the wonderful benefits of their faith, but they fail to realize its value and glory. Like children brought up in the palace of the King they take everything as a matter of course. We should set a high value on our religion, and for its sake endure generously and cheerfully the prejudice and hatred with which our inheritance is confronted.

The Evangelization Station

Hudson, Florida, USA

E-mail: evangelization@earthlink.net

www.evangelizationstation.com

Pamphlet 389

Anti-Catholic Prejudice

Martin J. Scott, S.J.

The word prejudice comes from two Latin words—*pre-*, which means before, and *judicium*, which means judgment. Prejudice, therefore, means judgment passed on something before sufficient data has been obtained on it. Most people who have prejudices lose them when they inform themselves better on the objects of their prejudices.

It is well known among scholars that men who have had strong prejudice against the Catholic Church have become her admirers infrequently were adherents and champions after examining her history and teachings.

The Catholic Church is the oldest corporate organization in the world. She is the only universal Church. She is the Light of the world. In the course of centuries, she has had to do battle against evil measures an evil men. She has never compromised on Christ’s teaching and morality. Consequently, she has frequently had evil men and evil forces arrayed against her.

The Catholic Church is at war with the world. The war between the church and the world will never end. Consequently, propaganda and one form or another will always be active against the Catholic Church. The Church and the world can never come to terms. They are as opposed as day and night. Light and darkness cannot exist together. Christ preached a kingdom not of this world; the world declares that there is no spiritual kingdom. Christ stands for eternal life; the world lives for the present only. Between the two, therefore, there is bound to be antagonism. This explains the hatred of the world for the Church of Christ. And it explains its propaganda and misrepresentation with regard to the Church.

The world is prejudiced against the Church because it sees her in a false light, will not try to see her correctly, does not want to see her correctly. In our day the prejudice of the world takes the form of either hatred or indifference. Of the two, indifference is the worst. You can combat hatred, but indifference usually refuses dialogue.

Today prejudice is shown around the world with those in power doing everything possible to destroy belief in Christianity. It is shown by indifference in our own country, where many people are so little concerned about religion that they are not interested enough in it to care, one way or another, what people believe or if and how they worship.

There is another prejudice harder to understand, namely that of non-Catholic Christians, or, as they are sometimes called, the Evangelical Churches. It is sad to say, but true, that at times the prejudices of Protestants or Evangelicals is greater and more intense than that of the world at large. This is due to the fact that they are contenders for what the Catholic Church holds that she alone possesses, namely, the true religion of Jesus Christ.

There would be little or no antagonism between Catholics and Protestants if the Catholic Church would drop her claim to being the sole true religion of Christianity. There is virtually no antagonism between the various Evangelical Churches. There may be differences of Creed and various forms of worship, but since they all proclaim that one religion as good as another, they are mutually tolerant of one another, and whatever rivalry may exist among them is of a friendly kind. Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Congregationalists and the hundreds of other evangelical bodies extend to one another the hand of fellowship.

No matter what their differences, they form a solid front against the Catholic Church. This is due mainly to two reasons. First, if the Catholic Church is right, they are wrong. And secondly, in order to make the Catholic Church wrong they are prepared to support whatever discredits her.

Let us take up these two points. Nobody wants to admit he is wrong. But if a Protestant admits that the Catholic religion is right, he condemns himself. An Episcopalian may admit that a Presbyterian is right without surrendering his own position. That is why all the Protestant sects harmonize and fraternize, more or less. But an Episcopalian can not admit that the Catholic Church is right and yet remain an Episcopalian. One excludes the other.

The basis of the Protestant position is that one religion is as good as another. This is the outcome of

the doctrine of private judgment. If the judgment of one person impelled him to be a Baptist, that of another may cause him to be a Methodist. Of course such procedure is a logical, for it comes to the same thing as saying that truth and falsehood are equally right.

For example, if the Episcopalian creed is true, the Presbyterian cannot be true, for the simple reason that one of firms with the other denies. The Episcopalians hold that the Episcopate at is essential to the Church of Christ. The Presbyterians deny this. Both cannot be right, since what one affirms the other denies. Truth may be with one but not with both at the same time. One or the other must, therefore, be false. To say, therefore that one religion is as good as another is to maintain that a lie is good as the truth.

Incidentally this demonstrates the false basis on which the evangelical churches rest. We see today the logical outcome of this principle by the trend of Protestantism toward modernism, which is only another name for Rationalism or the rejection of revealed religion.

Modernists are logical and consistent at all events. Following their doctrine of private judgment it has led them to reject virtually everything that Protestantism proclaimed in the beginning. The Bible was to take the place of God's living Church. The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible was the constitution of the Reformers. It did not matter that the Bible proclaimed one thing to one person, and it's contradiction to another. In their enthusiasm over discovering what they suppose to be a new religion, wherein everyone was to be Pope, they overlooked what their Modernists descendents are forced to look at face-to-face, and in consequence of which they discard the religion of their forefathers.

One religion cannot be as good as another, for the simple reason that a lie cannot be as good as truth. That is as evident as water is wet. But because the various Evangelical Churches close their eyes to a contradiction in religion, which they could not tolerate in other matters, they live on together in harmony. They call this broad mindedness. It is broad. Very broad; as broad as saying that two and two make five.

Protestants, therefore, are mutually liberal and considerate because their position is weak. One cannot afford to declare the other wrong because to do so would be to pronounce condemnation on themselves. Hence their enemy, their antagonism to that Church built upon a rock, which proclaims that every creed different from hers is wrong. And this brings us to the second point of our consideration.

It was necessary for the reformers to discredit the Catholic Church. Unless they could show that she was false they themselves could not be true. Unless they could show that she had erred there was no justification for their establishing a new religion. Now Christ had said that His Church would never err. He did not say that members of His Church would not sin or err. In fact, he foretold sin and scandal, even in high places. He established the Sacrament of Penance for sinners in His Church. Christ guaranteed His Church against error, but not its members against sin or error.

The first little Church of Christ with Jesus as Pastor and the twelve as members had its sin and scandal. Judas was a thief and traitor, Peter was weak and denied his Lord. The first Council of the Church, a few years after the resurrection, was held, among other things to remedy abuses. There will always be abuses in the church of Christ. Men, not angels, are its ministers. The proof of the divinity of the Catholic Church is that in spite of the weaknesses of some of its members and rulers it exists in the world today. Unless it were divinely guided and sustained it would have perished long ago from storms without and weakness within.

Protestantism, with all the support from state and all of its concessions to human nature, and all its esthetic appeal, or lack of it, is now, after a few centuries, splintering and crumbling. But the Church built upon the rock is, after 20 centuries, firmer than ever. It is the one Church in the world that a universal, the only one that speaks with the authority of Christ and the only one that even claims to be unerring.

Consequently, to return to our argument, the reformers had to discredit the Catholic Church to gain credit for their own. This is not the place to go into details. I content myself with saying that those