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Catholicism and Coercion



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Apostles or Apostates

You Are a Christian Now

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Catholicism and Coercion

Catholics and Protestants are dying today for freedom. And yet, the official doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church does not sanction such religious freedom as that for which many Catholics are fighting today. This may sound both harsh and contradictory, but the facts necessitate such a statement. The proof for such a statement is found in the Catholic justification of the Inquisition. The Inquisition, it will be remembered, exercised the power of life and death over those individuals who were labeled heretics. In presenting this proof remember that we draw our material from works which have been written and approved by Roman Catholics. Most of the material is drawn from *The Catholic Encyclopedia*¹ which is available in English in many public libraries. The Catholic justification of the Inquisition is as terrible an indictment as could be made against them and it clearly shows that the official attitude of that Church is against allowing any other Church religious freedom.

We have no personal antagonism toward any Roman Catholic. We have friends who are members of that Church. However, our friendship for them must not hold us back from presenting facts, as unpleasant as these facts may seem to be to the reader. We also realize that many members of that Church do not realize that their Church is against religious liberty as practiced in the United States today. They should appreciate our calling their attention to these facts. We trust that they shall not become our enemy because we tell them the truth (Gal. 4:16). They, as well as we, should give heed to Paul's command to prove all things and to hold fast that which is good (I Thess. 5:21).

I. THE ADMISSION THAT THE INQUISITION WAS NOT APOSTOLIC

The Catholic Encyclopedia admitted the scriptural position concerning the treatment of heretics when it admitted that the apostles did not use, or teach such a use, physical violence on

heretics. The first paragraphs of the article on the "Inquisition" pointed to the fact that although the apostles were firmly convinced that the Faith must be delivered undefiled to posterity, they did not sanction the Old Testament penalties, such as death, for heretics. Instead, the apostles thought that it was sufficient to exclude heretics from the communion of the church. They simply withdrew fellowship from heretics and taught against their errors. The author also granted that the Christians of the first three centuries did not have any other attitude toward those who erred in matters of faith. Although they were surrounded by heretics, such men as Tertullian and Cyprian of Carthage did not believe that physical violence should be used on heretics. They insisted, the author admits, on complete religious liberty and they taught that although Judaism used violence on heretics the Christian faith was content with spiritual punishments. They withdrew fellowship, but they did not torture any heretic in any trial and they did not take the life of any confirmed heretics (Vol. VIII:26).

Why are these admissions so important in a consideration of the question of whether or not it was, or is, right to put heretics to death? For the simple reason that they reveal that the Roman Catholic Church (in the Inquisition, and in their adherence today to the principles, if not to the practice, of the Inquisition) has violated both of her standards of faith and practice. Wherein has she done this? The Roman Catholic Church maintains that the Bible and tradition are her standards of faith. But how can such be her standards of faith and practice when she admits that the apostles in the first century did not teach or practice the Inquisition which put men to death; and when they also grant that the church of the first three centuries did not admit those principles into her faith and practice. Thus the practice of putting heretics to death cannot be traced back to the days of the inspired apostles by the avenue either of the Bible or of tradition. The position of the Roman Catholic Church on this question is clearly an apostasy when measured by both the standards which she claims to accept. It is heresy. If the apostles had

refrained from writing the principles of the Inquisition and delivering it in writing to the church; and if instead they had committed it to the church orally, surely the church of the first three centuries would have practiced it. Furthermore, the church would have taken the initiative in this matter when the principles of the Inquisition began to be preached and practiced; but instead the author maintained that the State took the initiative in the persecution of heretics and only after that did the church take it up. The early church did not teach or practice it, so the Roman Catholics cannot justify it even from tradition. If the use of physical violence on heretics is right, Christ and the apostles were defective in their teaching and practice for they failed to give a command which would imply it or an action which would sanction it.

Let us now notice how the Roman Catholic Church traces the development of the Inquisition. *Let us bear in mind that any argument which they advance to justify it is defeated, with reference to the scripturalness of the Inquisition, by their admission that the New Testament does not teach it and that the church of the first few centuries did not practice it.* Thus they cannot justify it as the will of God under the new covenant which is in force today.²

II. HOW THE CHANGE CAME ABOUT

The Catholic Encyclopedia pointed out that the imperial successors of Constantine began to regard themselves as rulers and keepers of the Church's "temporal and material conditions." When they began to employ force on heretics, such men as Hilary of Poitiers and Augustine were opposed to the measures which involved the use of force. Augustine later changed his views on the subject. In the fifth century Optatus of Mileve was the first Catholic bishop to maintain that there should be such cooperation between the Church and State in religious matters that the death penalty could be inflicted on heretics. At least, he believed that such a right existed. It was about this time that the Old Testament, for the first time,

was appealed to in support of such a doctrine. However, the author pointed out that Christian teachers previously had rejected such appeals (Vol. VIII:26, 27).

Thus it was that toward the end of the first five centuries the position began to be taken that the death penalty could be used, rightfully, against heretics. However, the majority contended that such a course toward heretics was impossible to reconcile with the Christian faith. But by the time of the eleventh century the attitude had so changed that some heretics were executed. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* maintained that these executions were due to the arbitrary actions of individual rulers as well as to outbreaks on the part of the populace. There were, the author admits, even then certain canonists who thought that the church had the right to execute heretics but at that time it was still largely an academic question for as yet it did not exercise a great deal of influence on the conduct of the entire Church.

The author contended that the civil rulers led the way in the severity of the treatment of heretics. For example, Alexander III, in 1179, did not contend for capital punishment for heretics. He was much milder than some of the civil rulers. But we must remember that these civil rulers were Catholics. Alexander III did, however, request the civil rulers to silence the heretics with force if such was necessary. The heretics could be put in prison and their property appropriated; or their homes could be destroyed and they could be exiled (VIII:29). So far, the individual rulers who were members of the Roman Catholic Church were ahead of ecclesiastical legislation, but we need only to give such legislation time and it will catch up with the civil authorities in its severity. Time was given, and it did catch up. The imperial rescript for Lombardy in 1224 was the first law which contemplated death by fire. It was incorporated into the ecclesiastical criminal law in 1231 and it was not long after that that it appeared in Rome, the very seat of the Papacy. This, our author states, marks the beginning of the Inquisition in the Middle Ages (VIII:30). By this time the papacy had become

so involved in the persecution of heretics that in 1254 Innocent IV would not allow death or life imprisonment sentences to be given and enforced *unless it was done with the consent of the episcopal* (VIII:30).

The papacy finally gave its consent to the torture of suspects as a means of getting the truth from them. This reminds us of the brutal methods which have been employed at times by a few policemen and by the Japanese and the Nazis. This torture, in theory, was not to cause the loss of limbs or life. At first the clerics were not allowed to be present when torture was used. However, if it was too odious for their presence, why was it permitted at all? Finally, the clerics were permitted to be present and later it came to pass that suspects were examined in the confines of the torture chamber. Torture was supposed to be used only once in any particular case, but this regulation was dodged by applying torture anew when new evidence was brought forth; and by torturing the victim in "serial" fashion by stretching it out over a period of time and giving only a part of it at a time. They did not repeat the torture *but they continued it over a period of days!* But the principle of torture was just as wrong when applied in one instance as when applied in a dozen instances. The Popes, our author maintained, did not like the extremes to which the torturers went. Clement V ordained that torture should not be applied unless the diocesan bishop gave his consent. *This placed the sanction of the Roman Catholic Church on such unchristian procedures.* Furthermore, the Popes did not deny the principles, involved in the use of torture, from the time of the middle of the thirteenth century (VIII:32-33).

The Catholic Encyclopedia, in its article on the Inquisition, finally traced its development to the time when Gregory IX admitted that heretics should be punished with death (VIII:34). *The Papacy thus placed its stamp of approval, according to Roman Catholic sources, on the use of force and of the death penalty in dealing with heretics.* The question which now raises itself in our minds is: How did they justify the Inquisition and do they still believe in it, in principle if not in practice?

III. THE ATTEMPTS TO JUSTIFY THE INQUISITION

In the light of their admission that it was not practiced by the church in the first centuries, how do they try to justify the Inquisition? The following attempts to justify it are not all found in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, but most of them are, and all of them have been used by some people. Some of these "arguments" are not used by people today but they were used by people then.

(1) *It was done in the Old Testament; therefore, it is right under the New Testament* (VIII:35). This argument overlooks the fact that the Roman Catholics themselves admit that Christ did not teach it; the apostles did not teach it; and the early church did not practice it.³ The argument based on the Old Testament can be refuted by appealing to two facts. First, that we are not under the Old Testament; and second, the New Testament forbids it. *First*, are we under the Old Testament? The following lines of argument, when studied, make it clear that we are not under the Old Testament. (a) Moses prophesied that God would raise up a prophet, like unto him, and that the people should hearken unto that prophet when he was raised up (Deut. 18:15-18). That prophet has been raised up in the person of Jesus Christ (Acts 3:22). Christ has forbidden his church to use force on those who reject or fall away from his message. When certain apostles appealed to the Old Testament to justify calling down fire on a certain people, Jesus "turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them" (Luke 9:51, 52). We must listen to Christ, not to what Moses commanded, with reference to heretics. (b) The Old Testament predicted a new covenant and this prediction is fulfilled in the covenant which is known as the New Testament and which became of force after the death of Christ (Jer. 31:31-; Heb. 8:5-; 9:15-). (c) Although God spoke to people through certain prophets in times past, yet today His Spokesman is Christ (Heb. 1:1-). (d) The Old Testament has been abolished and we are joined to Christ in the New Testament (II Cor. 3:6-; Rom. 7:1-6).

It is clear that we are not under the Old Testament and thus what was done then with reference to heretics is not a pattern for Christians for they are under the New Testament. *Second*, does the New Testament sanction the execution of heretics? *The Catholic Encyclopedia* admitted that it did not for it admitted that the apostles never practiced nor taught it. The New Testament teaches that the church should withdraw from heretics, after an effort to reclaim them. Heretics are to be marked and avoided (Rom. 16:17, 18). "If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother" (II Thess. 3:14, 15). "A man that is a heretic after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself" (Titus 3:10, 11). "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds" (II John 10, 11). Christians may cut off heretics from their fellowship but they do not have the scriptural authority to cut off heretics from this life.

If one appeals to the Old Testament for justification for the execution of heretics, he will also appeal to it, if he is consistent, to justify several other things. *First*, a Roman Catholic priest told the writer that the State, not the Church, was the one who executed the heretics. But when we go back to the Old Testament we find that Church and State were combined and that the Jewish religious leaders and the congregation executed capital punishment (Num. 35:9-21). *Second*, adulterers were put to death (Deut. 22:22-24). *Third*, some rebellious, hardened sons were put to death (Deut. 21:21; Lev. 20:9; Ex. 21:17). *Fourth*, idolaters, false prophets, those who practiced wizardry and those who blasphemed were put to death (Lev. 22:2; 20:27; 24:16; Num. 15:35; Deut. 31:1-11; I Kings 13:2). One can justify the Church in putting these to death by an appeal to the Old Testament *if he can justify by such an appeal the execution of heretics.*

(2) *Heresy, it was argued, was high treason (VIII:35, 36).* Unity of faith was the best assurance of a State's unity, prosperity and stability. Those who spread religious dissension hurt both Church and State. The State, being closely bound up in their thinking with the Church, must stamp out that which hurts her and which also hurts the Church. The enemies of the cross, they said, were also the enemies of the State. Therefore, they should be dealt with as enemies of the State for their evil doctrines threatened the welfare of the civilization within the State. Let us observe two things. *First*, that this argument can be used by any religion which has gained the upper hand in any nation. It was one of the reasons that the Romans persecuted the church during the first few centuries. They regarded the Christian faith, with its exclusive claim of the will of God and of the right worship, as being antagonistic to the religions of the State and as violating the unity of the State; which unity of the State was found both in its civil and its religious life. The same argument could be used by any majority group against any minority group. It would justify Lutherans, when they predominate in a nation, in putting Roman Catholics to death. *Second*, this argument overlooks the fact that the New Testament does not sanction the use of force on heretics and therefore this argument is based on human wisdom and human tradition and not on the word of God. Furthermore, if one uses this argument to sanction the execution of heretics, it could be used also to sanction the execution of individuals for refusing to live good moral lives for such immoral lives are a violation of God's word and they endanger civilization. But Jesus' kingdom is not of this world so his servants do not use the sword (John 18:36).

(3) *The Roman Catholic Church tried to justify the Inquisition by maintaining that religious intolerance seems to be a sort of iron rule of mankind (VIII:35).* The implication is that since men have used force so often on men of other beliefs that it is not so bad for the Church to do it. However, the church of Christ must take her instructions from the Word and not from the world. The Christian nature, not unregenerate

human nature, is to be our standard (Matt. 5:38-48). The passage, just referred to in Matthew, certainly indicates that what Christ expects of His disciples is far in advance of what one can expect from unregenerate human nature. One can justify almost any kind of conduct if his standard is simply what human beings have tended to do throughout history. For example, such a standard justifies adultery.

(4) *It was argued that it was right, as they viewed it, to put a robber to death; therefore it was right to put to death those who cheat us, through false doctrines, out of our spiritual and eternal heritage (VIII:35).* Such an argument as this would have been used in the first few centuries to justify the execution of heretics if Christ and the apostles had been in favor of such a thing. No amount of human reasoning can do away with the fact that Christ did not come to destroy lives and that the apostles did not teach or practice the principles of the Inquisition (Luke 9:54; *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, VIII:26). Jesus and the apostles saw the danger of heresy, but they did not make provisions for the execution of heretics. The entire emphasis of the New Testament on love, even for enemies, makes it impossible that informed Christians should kill heretics. Furthermore, every argument of this type which is based on human reason may also be used to justify the execution of Christians who live immoral lives and also enemies of the church who have never professed the name of Christ. One could argue, with as much reason, that since the immoral lives of some Christians turn people away from the faith and the eternal heritage which could be theirs, that we ought to kill such immoral Christians and thus remove that stumbling block from the path of others. One could argue that since those who persecute the church are keeping people from receiving the gospel, who might otherwise receive it, that therefore we should fight and kill them. And yet, we know that the church of Christ, when persecuted, did not kill those who persecuted it (Acts 8:1-; 9:1-; I Pet. 2:19-24). On this same line of reasoning one could argue that since religions other than Christianity cheat people out of their eternal heritage that

therefore Christians should use the force of arms to wipe out such religions in order that the children, who are now growing up under the influence of these religions, may have an opportunity to grow up under the influence of Christian teaching. All arguments of this nature are based on the wisdom of man and they violate the letter and the spirit of the New Testament.

(5) *The Roman Catholics have pointed out that some of the Protestant reformers believed that it was right to put heretics to death* (VIII:35). The author of the article on the Inquisition said that these reformers began to advocate tolerance only when their power ended and they could not successfully oppose with force those who disagreed with them. Certainly such a course was pursued by the Roman Catholic Church during the Middle Ages! We do not have to justify those reformers. They erred but their error does not justify the Catholic Church in her error in this matter. And in addition to this, we must remember where these reformers got the idea of using force on heretics. They got the idea from their Roman Catholic background, out of which they came, *and not from the New Testament*. Then, too, no Protestant church, which we know of, would write an article today and justify the principle of the use of force on heretics. And yet, Roman Catholic writers do that very thing, as we shall point out a little farther on. The writer of this booklet is a member of the church of Christ. He is not associated with those groups which are commonly known as the Protestant churches. Therefore, he does not feel called on to defend any doctrine except New Testament doctrine. We are not in favor of the traditions of men regardless of whether or not those men are Roman Catholics or Protestants. We advocate Christ's teachings, and not Roman Catholicism or what is known as Protestantism. We try to teach and practice the word of God, and not the errors of men.

(6) *The Roman Catholics have tried to excuse their Church by saying that the civil powers, not the Church, put heretics to death* (VIII:34). A Roman Catholic, S. B. Smith, in a

textbook which was printed with the approval of Roman Catholic authorities, said that Cardinal Tarquini had pointed out that it cannot be proved that the Church does not have the right to exercise directly the power of inflicting the penalty of death.⁴ Thus, regardless of what actually took place in practice, no Roman Catholic can prove that it would be considered wrong by their Church for their Church to thus exercise this power. Then, too, notice the following. *First*, the civil rulers during the Inquisition, who helped carry out the penalty of death, were Roman Catholics and under the jurisdiction of the Roman Catholic Church. *Second*, the Roman Catholic Church, not the civil State, tried a person for heresy, pronounced him a heretic, expelled him from the Church and turned him over to the State to do *her duty* and inflict the temporal punishment which had been pronounced by the Church court.⁵ Thus their Church does not escape any of the stigma of the Inquisition by trying to maintain that much of the responsibility rested on the State. For, after all, these rulers were Catholics and in subjection to the Pope.

(7) *Catholics have maintained that the Inquisition related to the field of discipline and not to that of the dogmatic teaching or belief of the Roman Catholic Church (VIII:36).* The idea here seems to be that even if they erred in this matter it was not an error in faith. However, since faith comes by hearing God's Word (Rom. 10:17); since the apostles and the early church did not practice it; since it is opposed to the letter and the spirit of the New Testament, how can a church which claims to be Christ's church try to justify the Inquisition? Our treatment of our fellowman, even of heretics, is such a vital matter of faith and practice that the New Testament teaches us how to do it. It is a question of faith and morals whether or not one is to take the life of another. The Inquisition said that it was right to put heretics to death. The church set forth in the New Testament did not have such teaching nor did it follow such a course. And the church that follows such a course has certainly erred in so far as her teaching and practice commit her to that course. Call it discipline

if you want to, but taking the life of a fellowman is a moral issue.

(8) *Some have argued that the punishment demanded under the Old Testament for heresy could not be abrogated for Christ came to fulfil and not to destroy the law, Matt. 5:17 (VIII:35).* This argument logically justifies the offering of animal sacrifices; the practice of circumcision, the execution of those who commit adultery; in fact, it justifies all things which were commanded under that law. Why use it just to prove one thing when you reject about every other thing which it could be used to justify? The fact is that Christ did fulfil the law. He said it would not pass away, that none of it would pass, until all of it was fulfilled. The law has passed; therefore all of it has been fulfilled for none was to pass from it until all of it was fulfilled (Rom. 7:1-6; 2 Cor. 3:6; Col. 2:14-16). Jesus taught that when he had fulfilled the law his new covenant would take the place of the old law. If he did not mean this why did he, in the Sermon on the Mount, point out what Moses had taught and then tell them something different? Christ indicated that his authority and will was to take the place of the authority and word of the Old Testament. And it has done so. Those who contend that it has not done so are really denying that Jesus fulfilled the old law and they are also denying that we are under the *new* covenant today instead of the *old* covenant or testament (Heb. 9:15-17).

(9) *John 15:6 is cited, but that passage does not give any Christian the right to punish heretics with physical violence (VIII:35).* Christ here referred to what men do with withered branches. Something like unto that will some day be done with the ungodly. *When and by whom?* When the Son of man shall send forth His angels and "they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 13:40-42). That the inspired apostles knew that Christ did not here give men the authority to kill heretics is demonstrated in the fact that

the New Testament did not teach such a treatment of heretics by Christians and the apostles did not practice it. That such a treatment of heretics was not included in the teaching or practice of the apostles is acknowledged, as we have pointed out, by *The Catholic Encyclopedia*.

(10) *The Roman Catholic Church teaches that the Church has authority from Christ to make laws and also the power to enforce those laws even if it necessitates physical violence and death* (VIII:36). Heresy strikes at the life of the Church and the Church, to defend itself, has the right to make and enforce laws against the heretics. But immoral lives threaten the Church, so why not make laws and kill the immoral? This argument is annihilated when we remember that the apostles and inspired men of the first century delivered God's complete and full will for the church; and that in this will we do not find any provisions for making laws against heretics and enforcing them with the death penalty. The church in Peter's day, and in the first few centuries thereafter, did not teach that she had such a right and she did not do anything in her practice that would imply that she had such a right. Since the days of inspiration have closed, no one has the authority to add to or to take from the word of God. Thus the church does not have the right to advocate such a doctrine which is so foreign to the word and the spirit of the New Testament. Spiritual weapons are the weapons which the church is authorized, by the New Testament, to use in combatting heresy.

The justifications of the Inquisition which we have mentioned so far, are found in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. Some of them seemed to be used to justify it, and some of them are referred to simply as a means of showing how some men during the Middle Ages justified the Inquisition. We want now to notice some other efforts which some have made elsewhere to justify the principle which made possible the Inquisition.

(11) *Some have argued that Peter executed Ananias* (Acts 5). If he did, this would be a case where the one whom the Catholics call the first Pope put a heretic to death without call-

ing on the civil powers! However, the "death of those persons (Ananias and Sapphira) is not represented as the act of the apostles, or in any manner procured or occasioned by them. It is recorded as the visitation of God, without any curse, imprecation or wish of men." We do not know that Peter knew that Ananias would die. Furthermore, Ananias' wife was given an opportunity either to show her innocence or to repent. She did neither and Peter knew, from what had happened to Ananias, that she would perish for her deception. If this example justifies Christians in taking life, it justifies the destruction of hypocrites and sinners in the church by members of the church. The case of Ananias was not a case of a heretic who was teaching false doctrine; instead it was a case of a liar who attempted to deceive. The heretics the Catholics put to death were generally people who acknowledged that they held such and such a doctrine and thus they were not hypocrites about it. No one, who believes the Bible, disputes the power or the right of God to terminate life when He sees fit. However, no one who really understands the teaching of the Bible concerning vengeance will try to place the punishment of heresy, or any other sin, by physical violence in the hands of Christians either as individuals or as a group (Rom. 12:19). God has not given Christians the authority to do it and even *The Catholic Encyclopedia* admits that it was against the conscience of the Christians, including the apostles, of the first three centuries.

(12) *Did Paul inflict blindness on a false teacher?* (Acts 13:9). If he did, this is an example of how an apostle treated an enemy of the gospel who was not a member of the church and thus who could not have been a heretic or one who had departed from the faith. He never was in the faith. Thus to use this case, to justify the Christian in using physical force on another person, is to use a case which, if it justifies the use of physical violence by Christians, justifies the use of force on non-Christians who oppose the preaching of the gospel. Thus it would justify putting teachers of other religions to death. However, when we examine this incident we discover

that Paul did not cause the man to go blind. He simply announced that God's hand was to be on that individual (Acts 13:11). Evidently Paul had been supernaturally informed of that which was to take place as the result of a direct act of God.

(13) *The argument which is based on Romans 13.* There are some who argue that the church should call on the "powers that be" to use the sword to punish heretics, and other types of evildoers. Let us observe, *first*, that the governments of Romans 13 are not the descendants of the government of Israel. The power or government under which Paul wrote Romans 13 was a pagan government which was like the pagan governments which existed around Israel when the Jews were the chosen people of God. God overruled Assyria, Nebuchadnezzar, and Rome to work out purposes concerning which they did not even dream (Isa. 10:5-; Jer. 25:8-14; Dan. 2:21, 37; 4:17, 25; John 19:10, 11). They took no thought of Jehovah. They did not acknowledge Him as the only true God. They did not submit to His revealed will. But in spite of that God overruled them to punish evildoers. *Second*, God nowhere authorizes Christians to ask the civil government to persecute heretics. We have just as much authority to ask them to punish hypocrisy, lying, carelessness about attending church services, and many other things that are connected with the Christian life as we have to ask them to punish those who teach false doctrine. For, after all, these ungodly "Christians" teach false doctrines by their lives. They are saying that one can be a Christian and yet not make the effort to live like a Christian. Then, too, we have as much right to ask them to punish teachers of such religions as Buddhism, for they teach some doctrines which are evil and false, as we have to ask them to punish members of the church who teach false doctrines. Every argument for the civil powers to punish heretics, at the request of the church and when the church points out the individual heretics, is just as strong an argument for punishing the other types of evildoers which we have just mentioned. *Third*, if Romans 13 means that the church

is to call on the government to punish heretics, it means that the pagan government under which Romans 13 was written should have been requested by the church to kill heretics. The church does not claim or exercise such power. She made no such appeal. She manifested no such attitude. It is thus evident that she held no such doctrine.

Fourth, an analysis of Romans 13 will reveal that the references to the "powers that be" have no reference to the way that any Christian, or the church as a whole, was to treat any sort of enemy. Paul gives the Christian instruction in both Romans 13 and Romans 12 as to how they, the Christians, are to treat enemies. How were they to treat enemies? "Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not." "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. . . . Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. . . . Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 12:14, 17-21; 13:8, 10). Between the statement to overcome evil with good, and the statement to owe no man anything, but to love one another, we find Paul's teaching concerning the "powers that be". In these two chapters Paul tells the Christian how to treat his enemies and also how to treat the government under which he lives. (a) With reference to the government under which we live we are to pay taxes and give whatever obedience to it that it demands which does not conflict with our duty to God. (b) We are to love our enemies and since he does not say just our personal enemies; or our religious enemies; we conclude that enemies of all classes are to be treated in harmony with Paul's instruction to the Christian concerning the Christian attitude toward enemies. (c) Paul

here instructs Christians that although Rome was a persecuting and pagan power that God still, in some way, overruled her for the punishment of evildoers. The statements concerning God's overruling of the "powers that be" do not tell Christians how to treat their enemies but it tells them how God, to whom Christians leave vengeance (Rom. 12:19), carries out, in part at least, that vengeance. He overrules these powers to do precisely what He forbids Christians to do. The very way in which the Roman Catholic Church treated enemies, those who opposed her doctrine, in the Inquisition was the very way in which Paul said that Christians are not to treat their enemies. Wherein did they bless those who persecuted them? Wherein did they leave vengeance to the Lord? Wherein did they give these enemies to eat and to drink? Wherein did they endeavor to overcome evil with good? Instead they endeavored to overcome with physical violence that which they believed to be evil. Surely the Church which does such a thing has misinterpreted and set aside the teaching of Christ on this point.

It is also a fact, worthy of repeating, that the apostles and the church of the first three centuries, even according to Roman Catholic testimony, did not call on the civil powers to persecute Christians. This indicates that they did not believe that Romans 13 taught that the church was to call on the civil powers to put down heretics. Furthermore, *The Catholic Encyclopedia* maintained that even when heretics were first punished by the civil powers that it was the civil powers and not the church that took the first steps in this matter. The writer there indicated that when the civil powers began to do this that most of the leaders of the church protested against it and that a long period of time passed before the ecclesiastical authorities sanctioned the use of force on heretics and took the lead in the matter. This certainly indicates that the church of the first few centuries did not believe that the civil powers should be invoked to punish heretics, for if they had so believed they would have taken the initiative in this matter instead of protesting when those who had civil power proposed to use force to stamp out heresy.

The fact cited in the above paragraph refutes a possible argument, in reply to our argument on Romans 13, that the reason the church in the days of the apostles did not call on the civil powers to punish heretics was because the civil powers were pagan and thus they were not interested in thus carrying out the bidding of the church. If this had been the case the church would have taken the initiative in invoking civil powers when the church had grown to such an extent that she had sufficient influence to sway the civil authorities. The fact that the civil powers took the initiative in the use of force on heretics and that the church protested, indicates that the church did not hold the doctrine of the Inquisition which was and is held by the Roman Catholic Church.

(14) *The argument from Acts 3:23.* Peter said, in quoting the prophecy of Moses concerning Christ, that "it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people." This passage does clearly indicate that it is no small matter to reject the word of Christ. Jesus himself said that those who rejected him would be judged by his word (John 12:48). Those who do not build on his word will not be able to stand the test of judgment (Matt. 7:24-, 21-; 25:31-). However, during this dispensation of time, which will not come to a close until the coming of Christ and the judgment of the world, the grace of God is extended to people by the church. God is long suffering with sinners as He wants them to come to repentance (II Pet. 3:9-). He wants to save them (Luke 9:52). However, the time will come when those who have rejected Christ, and spurned mercy, will have to give an account unto God for their conduct. They will be punished then for their refusal to accept Christ.

The statement that those who do not hear the prophet will be punished does not say when they will be punished nor by whom (Acts 3:23). The references which we have already given from the New Testament, concerning the treatment of enemies and of heretics, all indicate that this dispensation is

not the time and that Christians are not the people to punish those who refuse to hear Christ. The parable of the tares also teaches this lesson (Matt. 13:31-43).

It is well to observe also that if the passage in Acts justifies the individual Christian or the church in using violence, it justifies them in using violence not only on those who accept the gospel and then afterwards teach false doctrines; but also against those who refuse to accept the gospel. They are, indeed, the ones who refuse to hear Christ.

But, someone says, why bother about all of this since Catholicism has changed and thus no longer holds to the doctrine which made the Inquisition possible. We acknowledge that many members of the Roman Catholic Church do not believe in such a doctrine and that they would be against the use of force on heretics. And yet, let us remember that these members may be ignorant of the official doctrine of their Church. In Oakland, California, in 1944, a Roman Catholic priest, in the Dimond district of the city, maintained in my presence that their Church had the right to put heretics to death and that one reason they did not use force on heretics today was that there were too many millions of heretics. Was this the opinion of a particular priest who was uninformed or was he voicing the doctrine of his Church? In answering this question we shall not go to non-Catholic sources but rather to sources which are Catholic and which are approved by the Catholic Church.

IV. WOULD THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AGAIN USE FORCE AND VIOLENCE AGAINST THOSE WHOM SHE CONSIDERS HERETICS?

If she would not, why did the author in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* try to justify the Inquisition? Why would he do so, if he did not believe that it was right in principle? Although that Church is not in a position in our country to compel civil authorities to carry out her desire toward heretics, yet we are confident that if she had the power and the

opportunity she would use force on heretics (that is, on those whom she labels as heretics), although it is doubtless true that multitudes of Roman Catholics would not find it in their hearts to approve the action of their Church. But, after all, what could they do once their Church had spoken?

The Roman Catholic Church has boasted that she does not change. If this be true her spirit is still that of the Inquisition for such was once her spirit. Thus, if and when conditions get ripe, she will persecute for such is a part of her unchanging spirit. Many good Roman Catholics may not realize this, but their failure to realize it does not change the position of their Church. To prove my point from a Catholic source I quote from S. B. Smith's *Elements of Ecclesiastical Law*.⁶ This book is "official." It was "compiled with reference to the Syllabus, the 'Const. Apostolicae Sedis' of Pope Pius IX., the Council of the Vatican and the latest decisions of the Roman Congregations." It is "adapted especially to the discipline of the Church in the United States." This is the "fourth edition, revised according to the animadversions of the Roman Consultants appointed by the Cardinal Prefect of the Propaganda." So says the title page. Let us now quote. In speaking of the "division of the Hierarchy of the Church" Smith says, concerning the hierarchy of jurisdiction, that it is "the power to teach, define dogmas, and oblige the faithful to believe in them; to make laws; to take cognizance of, and adjudicate upon, ecclesiastical causes; to enforce the laws of the Church, and therefore to inflict suspension, excommunication, deposition, and other penalties . . ." (pp. 82-83). On page 89 the following is found:

"Protestants contend that the entire power of the Church consists in the right to teach and exhort, but not in the right to command, rule, or govern; whence they infer that she is not a perfect society or sovereign state. This theory is false; for the Church, as was seen, is vested *jure divino* with power, 1, to make laws; 2, to define and apply them (*potestas judicialis*); 3, to punish those who violate her laws (*potestas coercitiva*).

The punishments inflicted by the Church, in the exercise of her coercive authority, are chiefly spiritual (*poenae spirituales*), v. g., excommunication, suspension, and interdict. We say *chiefly*; for the Church can inflict temporal and even corporal punishments.

Has the Church power to inflict the penalty of death? Card. Tarquini thus answers: 1. Inferior ecclesiastics are forbidden, though only by ecclesiastical law, to exercise this power directly. 2. It is certain that the Pope and oecumenical councils have this power at least mediately—that is, they can, if the necessity of the Church demands, require a Catholic ruler to impose this penalty. 3. That they cannot directly exercise this power cannot be proved.

On page ninety-one Smith wrote that “When, for the better execution of laws, the Church and state assist one another, v. g., in the suppression of rebellion or heresy.” When the Pope decides that the necessity of the Roman Catholic Church demands it, Catholics clearly claim that they have the right to pronounce and execute the sentence of death.

The writer in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (VIII:35, 36) pointed out that when their Church became the dominant church, and when the disturbance of its unity thus disturbed also civil unity, that it was then the duty of the civil power to punish heretics. Thus it is clear that if their Church again dominates, as she once did, the same line of reasoning will be used to produce another Inquisition. The same seed in the same soil will not produce religious liberty, instead it will produce again the intolerance of the Inquisition.

The same *Encyclopedia* also stated that their Church has the power to make laws and that when these laws are violated it has the right to inflict the penalties which it has established (VIII:36). Of course, they would argue that she has the same right today. The only thing that is lacking is the power and the proper conditions to exercise that right. The writer pointed out that *the Catholic Church has never renounced the right to use physical force* (Vol. XI:703). She has the right, she

claims, to use coercion on her own subjects (XI:703). They claim the right to legislate; to enforce obedience; and to punish the disobedient (VII:323).

Perhaps someone may say that although it is clear that the Catholic Church claims the right to call on the civil powers to execute her sentence, as is clearly stated in the above *Encyclopedia* (VII:261; XII:266), it is not so clear that the Catholic Church claimed the right to do so when the heretics were not also rebels against the State. However, *The Catholic Encyclopedia* is clear on this point. It definitely states that although in many cases the heretics were also rebels against the State, that the claim of the Catholic Church to the power to coerce individuals was not confined to such cases. Their Church has the right to use force to protect the purity of the faith as well as to punish those who become apostates. Furthermore, they state that when they use such compulsion that it is not persecution and that those who are the object of that coercion are not martyrs (XI:703, 704).

In line with our contention that the Roman Catholic Church would repeat the Inquisition if she had the opportunity, we refer to a very significant word which occurs in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. The word is "abeyance". The writer pointed out that the use of physical force on heretics had fallen into *abeyance* (VII:260-261). This does not mean that their Church has declared that it is wrong, or that she has renounced the right to use such force; it simply means, as *The Century Dictionary and Cyclopaedia, 1876*, defines the word, that it is in "a state of suspended action or existence, or temporary inactivity."

Why should we be concerned about the matter for we are not members of the Roman Catholic Church and thus we are not those against whom they would employ coercion? We are not apostates from that church for we have never been members of it. But we ask such an objector to consider the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church toward "non-catholic Christians." She regards such people as *schismatics* (V:686).

They are considered as belonging to the soul if not to the visible body of the Roman Catholic Church (III:756; VII:261; XI:703). In other words, she regards all such as her rightful subjects and that as such they really should come under her discipline.

V. THE NEED TO BE VIGILANT AND ACTIVE

We must realize that in the growth of the Roman Catholic Church there is a danger to our freedom to proclaim the gospel without fear of molestation. Let us protect this freedom; not through adopting the error of the Roman Catholic Church and using physical violence, but through such an evangelization of the world that both the power and the spirit of their error will be broken by the power and spirit of the truth. We must use the truth to bring Roman Catholics, and others, out of the bondage of error (John 8:32). We must use the spiritual weapons of the gospel, the sword of the Spirit and the Christian armor in our fight against all error (Eph. 6:10). These spiritual weapons are not carnal, but they are not weak; for they are mighty through God. We war, indeed, but "we do not war after the flesh: for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds" (II Cor. 10:3-4). Let us call attention, both by the spoken word and by the written word, to the error of the Roman Catholic Church with which we have been concerned in this booklet. Let us be vigilant. Let us be active. If we slumber our children or our children's children are apt to sleep the sleep of death as the result of another Inquisition. Not only so, but if we slumber we shall be standing by and permitting men to be enslaved to error.

If the reader is interested in a further study of this question, we recommend: (1) C. J. Cadoux, *Roman Catholicism and Freedom* (London: Independent Press, Ltd. 1937). Professor Cadoux is the "Mackennal Professor of Church History at Mansfield College, Oxford." (2) J. W. West, *A Totalitarian Church, A Menace to Liberty and Democracy* (402 Sus-

sex St., Lynchburg, Virginia); (3) The pamphlets on Clerical Fascism in the U. S.; Italy; Austria and Mexico; and other pamphlets published by *The Converted Catholic Magazine* (Agora Publishing Co., 229 West 48th Street, New York 19, N. Y.)

FOOTNOTES

1. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: The Encyclopedia Press, Inc. Copyrighted in 1910 and 1913). The Nihil Obstat. is for October 1, 1910. Remy Lafort, S.T.D., Censor. Imprimatur. John M. Farley, Archbishop of New York.
2. See Hebrews 9:15- with reference to the time when the new covenant or new testament became of force.
3. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (Vol. VIII:26).
4. S. B. Smith, *Elements of Ecclesiastical Law*, p. 89.
5. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (Vol. VIII: 34).
6. This book was published in New York by Benziger Brothers. I have quoted from the fourth edition, revised, 1881.

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