

"I have no hesitation in saying that however unobjectionable may have been the original objects of the institution, or however pure may be the motives and purposes of the individual members, and notwithstanding the many great and good men who have from time to time belonged to the Order, yet, nevertheless, it is an institution which in my judgment is essentially wrong in the principle of its formation; that from its very nature it is liable to great abuses; that among the obligations which are found to be imposed on its members there are such as are entirely incompatible with the duty of good citizens; and that all secret associations, and members of which take upon themselves extraordinary obligations to one another, and are bound together by secret oaths, are naturally sources of jealousy and just alarm to others; are especially unfavorable to harmony and mutual confidence among men living together under popular institutions, and are dangerous to the general cause of civil liberty and good Government, under the influence of this conviction, it is my opinion that the future administration of all such oaths, and the formation of all such obligations, should be prohibited by law."

"Abraham Lincoln was not a Freemason. His well known character speaks eloquently against the despotism and illegal obligations of such oath-bound secret societies as Freemasonry. He well knew that the nation can no more endure with two kind oaths in her court rooms—the civil, and Masonic—than she could endure half free and half-slave." Notwithstanding this fact, the Masonic propaganda has seized upon Lincoln's name as one valuable to conjure with.

"John Hay writes W. C. Curtis that Abraham Lincoln was not a Mason. General U. S. Grant wrote in his autobiography: 'All secret, oath-bound political parties are so dangerous to any nation, no matter how pure or patriotic the motives and principles which first bring them together.'"

Charles Sumner, eminent American statesman, senator, and orator, wrote: "I find two powers here in Washington in harmony, and both are antagonistic to our free institutions, and tend to centralization and anarchy—Freemasonry and slavery—and they must both be destroyed. If our country is to be the home of the free as our ancestors designed it." Letter to Samuel D. Green, Chelsea, Mass.

Charles Francis Adams says: "Every man who takes a Masonic oath forbids himself from divulging any criminal act, unless it might be murder or treason, that may be communicated to him under the seal of fraternal bond, even though such concealment were to prove a burden upon his conscience and a violation of his bounden duty to society and to his God."

"A more perfect agent for the devising and execution of conspiracies against the Church and State could scarcely have been conceived." Judge Pliny Merrick, Worcester, Mass.—"It is true that a Royal Arch companion (to which degree I have been admitted and the highest office of which I have sustained) does swear that he will oppose the cause of a companion when engaged in any difficulty so far as to extricate him as such, murder and treason not excepted. I know these most odious clauses are part of the obligation of that degree for I believe that I reviewed that obligation and know that I have so heard it, and as high priest of a chapter have so myself administered it to others."

Mr. Corey states that seventy five per cent. of the officers of the government are Masons. For this statement, however, he gives no statistics.

WHY I AM A CATHOLIC.

BRIEF AND CLEAR REFERENCE OF THE CLAIMS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH. The Ashland Gazette, of Ashland, Nebraska, is publishing a series of articles on church preferences. The fourteenth article, written by the well-known Jesuit author, Rev. Charles Coppers, S. J., appears in the issue of last Friday. Although a very brief, it gives irrefutable proof that the Catholic Church is the true Church of Christ. The Telegraph reprints the article in full:

St. Paul writes to the Romans: "As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God. Therefore every one of us shall render account of God Himself." (xiv, 11, 12) "My name shall be known to all nations." (Mark xvi, 16) "Religion, is here declared to be of them, the principal one in fact. For the choice of my religion I must render account, not to family or country, not to friends or neighbors, but to God. Which religion must I choose? To confine myself here to the Christian religions alone—living, as we do, in the full splendor of Christian civilization—I find over three hundred organizations, each of which claims to be the true religion instituted by Christ. Now I am kindly invited by the editor of the Ashland Gazette to write a brief explanation of the reasons why, among all these claimants, I consider it my duty to belong to the Catholic religion. I cheerfully comply with this request, for the benefit of all earnest inquirers in a matter so important.

I shall, however, barely be able, in the narrow space allowed, to state summarily a few of the reasons, being willing, meanwhile, to answer any further questions that may be asked. My first reason is taken from the very name "Catholic," which means that this religion is spread over the whole earth. Christ certainly intended His religion to extend to all nations, for He said to His Apostles: "Go ye into the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." (Mark xvi, 15) and again: "I promised that He would help them in doing so till the end time; for He added: "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." (Matt. xxviii, 19, 20.)

In which Church are these words of Christ verified? In the Catholic Church alone. For, besides the fact that the Protestant claimants did not appear for fifteen centuries, who counts today, even according to the Protestant Prof. Kattenbach in the Realencylopadie, two hundred and sixty millions of members, who are scattered over all the earth, while he claims only one hundred and eighty millions for all the Protestant sects together. It must be remembered that Protestantism is not one religion, and does not claim to be one; but it is an aggregation of over three hundred different religions, each of which is usually confined to a small portion of the human race. I cannot admit that it would be the duty of any Catholic to leave his world wide Church and pass over to one of the minor sects: still it would be his duty to do so if he were not the Church of Christ. I stand by the ancient Creeds, all of which say: "I believe in the Catholic Church."

The second mark by which I recognize the Catholic Church as the true religion of Christ is its "Apostolicity," its direct descent from the Apostles, from whom it has come down in an unbroken succession, which cannot be said of any other Church. Every one of the Protestant sects had its beginning more than fifteen centuries later, and we know the founder of each, and the date and place of its commencement; while for the Catholic Church we know that its first head was the Apostle Peter, appointed by Christ Himself. Peter was succeeded by Linus, Linus by Cletus, Cletus by Clement, and so on, through a line of nearly two hundred and seventy Pontiffs, down to the present Pope Pius X. We know when each of them began to reign and when he died or resigned; and we have testimonies throughout the ages that they were acknowledged as the successors of St. Peter in the See of Rome. If any one denies the apostolicity of the Catholic religion, it is for him to tell us when this Church began, who was its founder, where, when, how, etc.

The Creed drawn up in the first General Council, which met at Nice, A. D. 325, says: "I believe in One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church." The Holy Catholic, at the time of that early Council, there were already several Christian sects which had separated themselves from the Mother Church; and there was need of pointing out some clear marks by which the real church of the Apostles could be readily distinguished from later upstarts and rival religions. The Creed for this purpose named four marks, namely, unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity. I have so far shown that the Catholic Church has the last two; now for the first two, unity and holiness. Protestantism, as remarked above, is not one religion, but an aggregation of many religions, different in worship, in doctrine, in government and independent of one another. Many of these sects are even divided within themselves; for instance, the Church of England embraces at least three very different beliefs, comprising the High, the Low, and the Broad Church. Some of its members, laymen and women, and so-called priests and Bishops, consider the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass as a Divine rite, while others call it an abomination. Unity is wanting.

The Catholic Church, on the contrary, evidently bears the mark of Unity. It is one in faith, one in worship, one in government, one in intercourse of all its members. For its only head is the Holy Spirit, the Vicar of Christ, Sovereign Pontiff, who leads and regulates all matters within the fold. Thus is fulfilled the promise of Christ: "There shall be one fold and one shepherd." (John x, 16) He entrusted this one flock to Peter, saying to Him: "Feed My lambs—feed My sheep." (John xxi, 17); and the successors of Peter have been continuing the work for nineteen centuries. Christ had predicted this unity by comparing the Church which He was to found to a kingdom, a city, a household, an edifice built on a rock; all which things have unity. The rock betokened the strength and permanence of His Church; in fact He added that the gates of hell should not prevail against it. He said Peter was the rock (Matt. xvi, 18); and he purposely changed his name to remind all future generations of this purpose. In reality Peter by his line of successors has been the strength and the bond of unity for the Church throughout the ages till the present day.

The fourth mark of the true Church is holiness or sanctity. Christ certainly founded His religion in order to sanctify the souls of men; therefore He promised to give to His Holy Spirit. His holiness, like a brilliant light, was not hidden under a bushel, but to shine forth in the eyes of the world at large. For this purpose it is not necessary that all its members should be always holy. In fact He allowed the traitor Judas to be one of His Apostles, and Peter himself to fall shamefully. So throughout the ages till now. With all this allowance for human weakness and depravity, the supernatural sanctity of the Church is conspicuous in many ways. First, by her lofty plane of morality which she upholds in her teachings. See how she protects the sanctity of marriage, which she declares to be a holy sacrament that the powers of earth cannot control. She forbids divorce as firmly as she does polygamy. She has ever refused to allow such abuses to kings and princesses as well as to the common people. She rather lost all England than yield to Henry VIII. She is the uncompromising opponent of race-suicide to day as ever.

Meanwhile to exalt the love and practice of chastity, she proposes to her children the models of Jesus and Mary, His Virgin Mother. Hence the celibacy of her clergy and the stainless purity of her religious. Her sanctity shines forth as well in the heroic charity of her prelates and religious as the sickbed of the plague-stricken and the dying.

It also shines forth with undimmed brilliancy in the many miracles which God has wrought in her behalf in every age. God alone can work a miracle, and He cannot work any in behalf of a false religion. Christ foretold that His followers should work miracles for Him: "He that believeth in Me, and works that I do he shall do, and greater than these shall he do" (John xiv, 12). In our own day the miraculous cures yearly performed at Lourdes, in France, invite the criticism of the world. If there were an imposture, it would have exploded long ago. It is only one example out of the many. Many Christians remain blind to all such proofs, just as most Jews remained blind to the miracles of Christ, and rather than believe in Him, they cried out: "Away with Him." They brought false charges against Him, and so men do now against His true Church. Christ foretold all this, saying: "If they have called the Good Man of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of His household?" (Matt. x, 25.)

Charges against the Catholic Church are plentiful even among good men and women have drunk in hatred of her with their mother's milk. And yet there is ever flowing into her domain a stream of converts from the most inchoate and most learned classes of society, men like Cardinals Newman and Manning, the Protestant Bishop Fathers Rivington and Benson, and thousands of other distinguished clergymen, writers and leaders of thought in England, America, Germany and other lands. Why do such converts come to us except because the Catholic religion is the true Church of Christ?

It is not sufficient to recognize this as a great national evil. It is of course, the first step towards reform, but it is not sufficient. It is not sufficient to pray for reform. It is not sufficient to go about bemoaning the evils of drink. We must settle down to work and do all in our power to remove the evil. It is easy for all to say what they would do if a foreign foe were to invade our country, but what is wanted are numbers of fearless men and women to oppose a foe that has invaded the United States; that is worse than any foreign foe, and that is sapping our very greatness. The great strength of a nation is in its homes, not in its army or navy. The great battles of the future will be in the markets of the world, where the steady hand, the clear eye and the unclouded intellect will win. It will be an intellectual rather than a physical conflict, and if your people are to be in the forefront they must first conquer the drink evil, that great enemy of the home, and thus purify the stage upon which man plays his life.

And again, in speaking of the virtue that is inspired and backed up by the laws, Father Hays said: "We have been told that we cannot make people virtuous by act of Parliament, but we can point to prisons every one of whose inmates is sober by the ministrations and noble bands of men and ministers give their lives to the uplifting of humanity while at the same time we are countenancing and encouraging that which is undoing their good work? It is as if a sinking vessel were being baled out by some while others were busy boring holes in its hull. Why should priests and philanthropists lay down their lives for the poor, when a legalized system of temptation for the sake of revenue does all in its power to damn the souls of those that the others are trying to save?"

Speaking of the good that could be accomplished in the interests of temperance by concentrated and united effort, Father Hays exclaimed: "I cannot, for the life of me, understand how any man claiming to be a lover of his country or a follower of Christ, can refuse to do his part to curb this vice, the cause of the greatest sins. By education, by cultivating a sound public opinion, by religion, by wise legislation we should do all in our power to wipe out this blot on our Christianity and our humanity. He concluded by making a stirring appeal to the moderate drinker, who, he said, can never tell when he may be

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