

1882

Roman Catholicism in the U.S.

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In traversing a field so vast and so fraught with interest, you can expect in this brief article no more than an outline of the subject

Roman Catholicism is one. Its roots extend back through the ages into Graeco-Latin soil, from the second to the eighth century. In this early period we find in embryo nearly every dogma of the Modern Roman Church. From Ignatius and Cyprian down to John of Damascus you will find the spirit of traditionalism, sacerdotalism, prelacy, ceremonialism, asceticism, monasticism and many other like but less popular features.

In the mediæval Latin age Roman-

ism presses to the front. About this time the East and the West have learned that two cannot walk together except they be agreed hence a division of the great Christian church and from this junction the Greek and Latin streams of thought and dogma flow in the main in separate channels. Following the latter from Charlemagne we come to the conquest of the Latin and Teutonic races in Europe, the development of the hierarchy and scholastic theology. But during this progress of the Roman church there were cradled in her bosom the elements of internal eruption which at the Reformation forever liberated their millions from the tyranny of Rome. At the council of Trent (1563) Roman Catholicism ^{marked} is as such not only by her separation from the Greeks but by her opposition to the evangelical principles

which obtained in her better parts; and by the way of Papal infallibility she takes a new departure for the "City of Peter"

Another paragraph is necessary to the understanding of that thing we call Roman Catholicism in the United States. Tridentine Theology must press on to its logical result, hence the excommunication of the more conservative element (the "old Catholics"), and the Vatican Council under Pius IX. . So that the Catholicism we call Roman may with propriety be called Vatican - and as such we find one of her branches in the United States. This branch upon which rest the eyes and in which dwell the hopes of the Roman Catholic world was, within the memory of some who still live so feeble that her priests walked as humble God-fearing men. But

to-day they are bigated numerous and wealthy. They have 7. archbishops, 53 bishops, 6 Vicars apostolic, priests by the multitude and membership of six millions of souls.

They have nearly 500 institutions of learning - with about 1200 teachers, 2383 sisters of charity of various orders who have under their care 33853 roman catholic girls. In addition to these they have a strong planting of the "Followers of Loyola" with an immense scholasticate at Maryland, professedly for all North America. It will be remembered that these jesuits in principle and record have been so obnoxious to government that they have been suppressed or expelled in Prussia, Italy, Bavaria and Switzerland also Guatemala. And since the Romish church founded an principis at variencie

with freedom has drawn these disturbers of the peace close to the papal breast, it is wise for Americans and all favorable to American freedom to thrust in the test-anger of the logician and see what relation the papal system sustains to the present and future of the United States.

That the American priesthood & parochial schools are loyal to the Vatican is evident from the fact that all teachers are chosen from among those who are of marked loyalty, and all priests are chosen in accord with the "bishops oath" which will be introduced further on. It is strange however that while Romanists in Europe are wrenching their necks from ^{the} leaden yoke of the Vatican, that Romanists in the United States should take up the feeble

words of Augustine - "when Rome has spoken that is the end of the matter". In this Augustinian spirit, even while the two last dogmas of the that church was hastening into bloom, the Roman clergy in the United States assembled in council at Baltimore sent to the Vatican a telegram expressing of their loyalty to the will of the "Sovereign Pontiff" and received in reply his congratulations for their zeal in vindicating the "contested rights" of the "Holy See". Judging then from the foregoing and many other arguments which might be made, it appears at once that if American institutions are founded upon any other principles than Vatican, there is war between the American Roman Catholic clergy and the constitution of the United States.

On the constitution of the United States you
 will find these words, "Congress shall make
 no ^{Laws} respecting an establishment of religion,
 or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or
 abridging the freedom of speech or of the press;
 or of the people peaceably to assemble and to
 petition the government for redress of
 grievances". On the spirit of these words
 the people have banished religious in-
 tolerance from their Republic and marched
 with triumph ^{through} an age of revolution and
 reformation, arraigning all abuses at
 the bar of public reason. When they have
 in the hour of error and alarm wander-
 ed from these principles - they have hastened
 to regain the road which alone leads to
 peace and liberty. Taking our stand
 then upon the constitution and record
 of the United States, we are prepared to
 name some of the points of difference be-
 tween American freedom and the so-called

"Contested rights" of the Roman hierarchy.

The American government calls herself a Republic; Romanism says she is a part of a monarchy. The American government says she has absolute power to make laws and enforce them; Romanism says she has no such rights except they be granted by the Pope. The American government says she is amenable only to the bar of Reason and of God; Romanism says she is amenable to the Pope. The American government declares her subjects the right to interpret the Scriptures and make them the rule of their faith and worship; Romanism declares that she is the only authorized interpreter of the Sacred Word and all others interpreting or acting contrary to her exposition are infidels and under anathema. The American government protects Protestant clergy in their priestly rights; Romanism says they have;

no such rights but are usurpers who ought to be punished.

The American nation by her catholicity of principle sets before the world the "Invisible Church" ruled by the Son of God, Direct communion between man and his Maker through our Lord Jesus Christ. The Word of God as the infallible ^{guide} to faith and morals. Justification as dependent upon the grace of God as touched by a living faith which reveals itself in good works.

A worship which appeals to the conscience, the intellect and the heart. A religion helpful to a self-governing people - a spiritual freedom which is a pioneer of intelligence and civilization.

Roman Catholicism in a bloody and malicious hand holds forth to the world the ghastly spectacle of a visible Church ruled by the Pope exalted above the invisible Church ruled by Jesus Christ.

Christianity measured by Romanism.

The High-way of communion between man and his Maker blocked by traditions, purgatory, saints and virgin. Tradition and the Decrees of Councils and Popes as superior to Gods revealed word. The Bible hid away in a corner, denied the Laity and impeded in its evangelical mission. Justification by faith besmeared by the tack-on of good works. A worship which appeals only to the senses and imagination. An imperative religion which is opposed to the liberty of limb and conscience. A religion which dethrones reason, impedes progress, blackens the soul and can survive only in serfdom and ignorance. Let the doubter visit Switzerland and compare the Roman with the Protestant cantons; Ireland and compare the Southern with the Northern counties; Canada and compare the Western with the Eastern sections. Compare Italy, Spain, Port-
g,

ugal and Mexico, with Russia, England, Scotland and the United States respectively. It is true France and Belgium are both thrifty and yet Roman Catholic but, concluding from large data, if they had been Catholics instead of Roman Catholic, their civilization to day would be higher, their morals purer and their progress greater. In further confirmation of the thoughts thus far offered we introduce in quotation the "Bishop's oath" i.e.

1. I —, with a firm faith believe and profess all and every one of the things contained in that creed which the holy Roman Church makes use of: I believe in one God the Father Almighty, etc. [Here follows the Nicene Creed]
2. I most steadfastly admit and embrace apostolic & ecclesiastical traditions, and all other observances and constitutions of the same church.
3. I also admit the holy Scriptures, according to,

to that sense which our holy mother church has held and does hold, to which it belongs to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the Scriptures; neither will I ever take and interpret them otherwise than according to the unanimous consent of the fathers

4. I also profess that there are truly and properly seven sacraments of the new law, instituted by Jesus Christ our Lord, and necessary for the salvation of mankind, though not all for every one, to wit: baptism, confirmation, the eucharist, penance, extreme unction, holy orders, and matrimony; and that they confer grace; and that of these, baptism, confirmation and ordination cannot be reiterated without sacrilege. I also receive and admit the received and approved ceremonies of the catholic church, used in the solemn administration of the aforesaid sacraments

5. I embrace and receive all and everyone of the things which have been defined and de-

clared in the holy council of Trent concerning original sin and justification

6. I profess, likewise, that in the mass there is offered to God a true, and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead; and that in the most holy sacrament of the eucharist there is truly, really, and substantially, the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that there is made a change of the whole essence of the bread into the body and of the whole essence of the wine into the blood; which change the catholic church calls transubstantiation.

7. I also confess that under either kind alone christ is received whole and entire, and a true sacrament.

8. I firmly hold that there is a purgatory

and that the souls therein detained are helped by the suffrages of the faithful. Likewise that the saints reigning with Christ are to be honored and invoked, and that they offer up prayers to God for us, and that their relics are to be had in veneration.

9. I must firmly assert that the images of Christ, and of the perpetual Virgin the Mother of God, and also of other saints, ought to be had and retained, and that due honor and veneration are ^{to} be given them.

I also affirm that the power of indulgences was left by Christ in the Church, and that the use of them is most wholesome to Christian people.

10. I acknowledge the holy Catholic Apostolic Roman Church for the mother and mistress of all churches; and promise and

swear true obedience to the Bishop of Rome successor to St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles, Vicar of Jesus Christ.

11. I likewise undauntingly receive and profess all other things delivered, defined, and declared by the Sacred Canons and General Councils, and particularly by the holy Council of Trent; and I condemn, reject and anathematize all things contrary thereto, and all heresies which the church has condemned, rejected and anathematized.

12. I do at this present, freely profess and truly hold this true catholic faith, without which no one can be saved; and I ^{promise} profess most constantly to retain and confess the same entire and inviolate, with Gods assistance, to the end of my life. And I will take care as far as in me lies, that it shall

be held, taught and preached by my subjects, or by those the care of whom shall appertain to me in my office. This I, —, promise, vow, and swear, so help me God, and these holy Gospels of God."

To a full understanding of the Roman system of doctrines two more articles of faith must be added, viz.: That "the blessed Virgin Mary, by a singular grace and privilege of Almighty God, in view of the merits of Christ Jesus the Savior of mankind, has been preserved free from all stain of original sin" (having no need of redemption).

"That the Roman pontiff, when he speaks *ex cathedra* — that is in discharge of the office of pastor and doctor of all Christians by virtue of his supreme apostolic authority

ity, he defines a doctrine regarding faith or morals - is possessed of that infallibility with which the divine Redeemer willed that his church should be endowed, and that therefore such definitions of the Roman pontiff are irreformable of themselves, and not from the consent of the church."

The logical outcome of the foregoing is, that American freedom and Roman catholicism can not culminate on the same soil. The question is which shall survive; let us answer keeping in mind the distinction between clergy and laity in the Romish church.

For Romanism we find the following arguments 1. A well brained hierarchy.

2. Oneness of papal system both sides the great waters. 3. The faithful care of the

priesthood over their flock. 4. Her elaborate ritualism. 5. Her appropriation of the fine arts - gothic cathedrals - altars - crucifixes - madonas - pictures - statues - relics of saints - decorations - processions - operative music and the like. 6. Their great school system and their industrious press. 7. Their rapid increase financially and numerically. 8. The Jesuits. Such are the arguments in favor of Roman catholic supremacy in the united States

Against Rome we note

1. The overthrow of Romanism does not demand that Roman catholics become Protestants, but catholics, when there will be neither Romanist nor Protestant, but one communion. 2. In the well trained hierarchy we have the figure of a tree

with a seeming growth in its topmost branch while decay is upon its roots; and since the papal altar is falling at Rome - surely the candlesticks tremble in the United States. 3. The encouragement the Eastern branches might offer the Western is shattered by the ^{late} record of Spain where in she made her queen a fugitive, and of France who preferred to humiliate a Protestant - Brines though it might sink the papacy; and by Austria who has proclaimed religious freedom. And by Bavaria in rejecting the dogma of papal "infallability", and by the victory of Teutonic over Latin ideas in Germany; also the late record of Italy so that there is not in all the earth, a nation with either the desire or the power to defend the papacy. 4. The Roman pastorate is shorn of much of its strength by its lack of vital Spirit life. 5. In the

elaborate Roman ritual there is nothing
 to satisfy the cravings of the soul, hence
 unrest in the Laity &c. The Roman Catholic
 schools for, so far as they convey light
 they supplant Romanism. 7. Their rapid
 increase in wealth and numbers is
 only a delusion, as will appear further
 on. 8. The Jesuits, for if history repeats
 itself, they will prove a thorn in its flesh
 9. Whatever of Catholic faith there is in the
 Roman Catholic church is arrayed against
 Romanism: let it be withdrawn and Ro-
 man dogmas will devour one another.
 10. The unincumbered Catholic faith
 11. The open Bible 12. The influence of our
 Lord Jesus Christ 13. Catholicity of prin-
 ciple 14. The Invisible Church - silent but
 powerful. 15. Direct contact with the Fa-
 ther through the Son. 16. Priority of posses-
 sion. 17. Our Institutions of learning. 18.
 The common interests of the masses

19. Prestige of Government. 20. The stream of life which will not be turned back, but flow on^{to} the fullness of liberty 21. The confessions of practical Romanists, 22. The eternal decrees of the Most High etc. etc.

The number of Roman Catholics in the United States in 1800 was 1,000,000. In 1850 1,614,000. In 1870, 4,600,000. In 1880, 6,367,000. A gain in 30 years of 5,367,000 or 178,900 per year. But, the Roman Catholic immigration to the U.S. during the last 30 years is 4,800,000. Add to this a natural increase and the immigrants and their children will exceed by hundreds of thousands the entire Roman Catholic population of the United States today. Then where are the 1,000,000 of 1880 and their offspring? The "Roman Catholic World" of July, 1874 estimated that of all Roman Catholic immigrants and

their children had remained loyal there would be in the United States at that date 24,000,000 of Roman Catholics. Then where are the 18,000,000? If then the Romanists are giving ^{to} us the U. S., three souls for every one they retain, the future of the question is easily solved.

With time and space nearly the same showing might be made in church property, institutions of learning, general intelligence etc.

A few hints in conclusion:

Let every means be used to educate the masses: Educate them if possible in Catholic schools; if not, educate them in parochial schools. For there is no way of dispelling darkness except by admitting light. It is very dark in the "mammoth cave"; but punctures the covering and the sunlight of heaven

will soon push out the darkness. Education is the pick-ax which is to open the thick skull of Romanism, that the divine light from the sky may enter and dispell superstition and ignorance. It has ever been and probably ever will be that reformers come from the educated classes. The dynamite of true catholic faith lies hid away in the heart of the Roman church, and education is the fuse through which the divine spark shall enter and shiver jesuitism and Roman priestcraft into ten thousand atoms.

We want from the Roman catholic ranks Reformers more than Proselytes. Men who will preach "Salvation by faith", more than we want exposers of the "confessional". We want men who will preach Jesus Christ and him crucified, from Roman catholic platforms to Roman catholic peoples; then

there will be neither Protestant- nor
Romanist; but one grand catholic
communion.