

What Catholics Do NOT Believe.



Sixth Edition 35,000

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In this pamphlet we are publishing, in an abridged form, a lecture delivered many years ago by the late Archbishop Ryan, then of St. Louis, Mo., on the subject "What Catholics Do Not Believe."

Most of the prevalent antipathy towards the Catholic Church is not directed against what Catholics actually believe, or what their Church actually stands for, but against what her enemies charge Catholics with believing or their Church with advocating.

Not only does the Catholic Church teach all that the most ancient documents of Christianity prove to have been the original revelation as taught by the Apostles and their immediate successors, but she stands for the loftiest forms of Christian morality.

If Archbishop Ryan were living today, his subject would probably be "What Catholics Do Not Believe and Do Not Advocate." In his lecture he would then emphatically declare that the Catholic Church does **not** advocate a union of Church and State in all countries; that the Pope is **not** seeking Temporal Domination throughout the world; that Catholics are **not** seeking to destroy the Public Schools, nor to control them; that they do **not** pass judgment on the marriages of Protestants, etc., etc.

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PEOPLE OPPOSED TO OUR TEACHINGS DO NOT UNDERSTAND THEM.

After long intercourse with non-Catholics of various religious denominations, and many of no denomination at all, I am profoundly impressed with the conviction, that most of the opposition to the Catholic Church, and the gravest obstacle to that mutual good feeling that ought to exist amongst members of all religious organizations, and, indeed, amongst all men, arise chiefly from a misunderstanding of what are really Catholic doctrines on important points.

Explanations of these doctrines seem almost as necessary in these days as in the days of the Apologies of the Early Fathers, some of them written

seventeen hundred years ago. My intercourse with non-Catholics has taught me also, strange as you may think it, a great respect for what are called bigoted people. They are generally persons deeply in earnest, persons who hate injustice and deceit, and because they imagine—falsely, of course—that the Catholic Church is a marvelous organization of those power of evil, they detest it. They form very often the most fervent and the most persevering converts to the Church. We can scarcely be angry with them, because they are angry with an institution of impossible existence. Their ideal of the Catholic Church involves a combination of contradictions. They are not opposed to the Church, but they are opposed to something which they think is the Catholic Church.

The doctrines of the Catholic Church are not variable opinions; the doctrines of the Catholic Church are sharply and authoritatively defined, and are easily known. Were I to tell you of any one doctrine which I asserted Catholics do not believe, but which they do, there is not a child who has learned his catechism, who could not detect the fraud. Hence, as these doctrines are the same everywhere, as you can find them in every authorized exposition of what Catholics really believe, there is no danger of special pleading or misrepresentation. I at once proceed to examine the subject, and to defend the Church by stating what Catholics do not believe.

CHURCH DOES NOT DETHRONE BUT EXALTS HUMAN REASON.

In the first place, then, Catholics do not believe that they are bound to submit their intellects to the decision of a human institution. They have first convinced themselves that the Church to which they pay allegiance and by which they are taught the truths of revelation is a divine institution—an unerring messenger from God to them. If, therefore, they submit to a decision of the Church, they submit to a decision of a tribunal which their reason has already accepted as unerring. If they were obliged to receive decisions on matters of faith, without having been already convinced that such decisions were given by a tribunal that could not err, then Catholics would be slaves. But there is no possibility of slavery in our position. On the contrary, the real dignity and liberty of human reason are consulted; for having arrived at a firm conviction on a certain point, I shall never yield the reason that God gave me, except to the decision of a tribunal, which that reason has already accepted as unerring. The man holds the balance in his hand. The scale against the doctrine descends, the other ascends.

Abraham would have erred grievously, if he had offered his son upon the mountain, unless absolutely certain of God's stern behest. He never could have offered that son upon a probability that God required it. He never could have sacrificed that son upon a message from Almighty God, unless delivered by a messenger rendered unerring by God; but, having received the order, he prepares to offer his son. So with my reason. I will offer it only on the mountain of God. I will offer it only at God's behest; and even

then I have only to offer it, not to sacrifice it. Reason, like Isaac, is offered; but reason, like Isaac, is not sacrificed, because there comes in a power that saves it. There comes in this decision of this unerring tribunal. Therefore the dignity of human reason is only preserved, where the Church is unerring. The dignity of human reason is preserved only where a man is certain he hears the command of Almighty God through a messenger that cannot deliver a false report.

CATHOLICS DO NOT BELIEVE RELIGION CONSISTS IN CEREMONIES.

Neither can it be said that this Church enslaves the human intellect by her magnificent ceremonial, and her use of the arts in the worship of Almighty God; because Catholics do not believe that religion consists in pomp and external show of ceremony. We must worship God "in spirit and in truth," or there is no religion. The pomp of ceremony, the use of the arts, these things may aid man in worshipping in spirit and in truth, but without this, worship is magnificent pageantry, if you please, but pageantry. Now the object of the use of the ceremonial, the object of the use of the arts in the worship of God, is to aid man to worship in spirit and in truth. First of all, we use these things as a suitable expression of the soul's allegiance to Almighty God. Some of the ceremonies of the Catholic Church are not seen by the people at all. In the consecration of a church, during part of the ceremony, the people are not even admitted.

The Church performs her ceremonies primarily for the Divine eye. You behold the priest, for instance, in the holy sacrifice of the Mass, turned away from the people, speaking in a tongue unknown to them, and in a tone to them inaudible. As regards the art of architecture, Pugin, the great English architect, tells us that he noticed in the old English Cathedrals of Catholic days, that the portions of these buildings hidden away from the people were as elaborately finished as the most conspicuous parts. These men built for the Divine Presence. But these ceremonies and these arts were destined also to touch the human heart, and call forth those holy sentiments of love and admiration, in which that heart speaks to God, and which are as really part of our nature, as reason itself. How even the silent temple in the dim twilight when no ceremony enlivens it, speaks to the soul and evokes its piety and its love of the beautiful!

"Hail, sacred tabernacles," cries a child of genius, speaking on this subject. "Hail, sacred tabernacles, where thou, O Lord, dost descend at the voice of a mortal. Hail, mysterious altar, where Faith comes to receive its immortal food. When the last hour has groaned in thy solemn towers; when its last beam fades away and dies in the dome; when the widow, holding her child by the hand, has wept on the pavement and retraced her steps like a silent ghost; when the sigh of the distant organ seems lulled to rest with the day; when the nave is deserted, and the levite, attentive to the lamps of the holy place, hardly crosses it again; then is the hour when I go to glide under

thy obscure vault, and to seek, while nature sleeps, Him that ever watches. Ye columns that veil the sacred asylums which my eyes dare not penetrate, at the foot of your immovable trunks I come to sigh. Forests of porphyry and marble! The air which the soul breathes under your arches, is full of mystery and of peace. Let love and anxious cares seek shade and solitude in the green shelter of groves to soothe their secret wounds. Oh! Darkness of the sanctuary! The eye of religion prefers thee to the woods which the breezes disturb. Nothing changes thy foliage. Thy still shade is the image of motionless eternity. Eternal pillars! Where are the hands that formed you? Man dies, but the holy thought animates the stone. I love, O Lord, the obscurity of thy temple, inhabited alone by thee and by death. One hears from afar the flood of time which roars on the borders of eternity."

As real as reason is the feeling here appealed to. It is not a question of the slavery of reason, but a question of the illumination and the sanctification of the sense of the beautiful. As real as reason is that love of the beautiful within the human soul, and, therefore, the Church, by appealing to this sense, does not silence reason, does not lead reason captive; but acts upon another power in the soul—acts upon the heart—acts upon and sanctifies the imagination, and the love of the beautiful. In her honor, be it said, that she possesses the greatest power to call forth these religious and sanctifying sentiments.

For another reason, do we use these arts in God's service, without enslaving the reason. You go into a Catholic Church; you see a number of pictures hung around the wall; you see a number of people passing from picture to picture in procession. They are performing what is called the "Stations of the Cross." They kneel before these pictures. Of course they do not adore them. They show respect to the picture, on a principle similar to that by which you respect an oil painting of your dead mother or father. They are not so foolish as to suppose there is life or strength in these material objects. But they kneel before them, because they remind them of the sufferings of our Divine Lord. In each picture is depicted a scene of His passion. You see the people moving in procession; you see old men mingling with little children. The old men can no longer read, but the Church holds before them the book of the large picture of the "Station of the Cross." She has a catholicity of means of getting at the human soul, as she has a catholicity of doctrine. She has means, if one sense be closed, to tell the story of redemption through another. The people behold these scenes in the life of our divine Lord. They are instructed at once, and moved to pity for our Lord's suffering, and to sorrow for sin. How often, too, have I seen little children looking at one of these "Stations of the Cross," representing, perhaps, the nailing of the sacred hands of our Lord to the gibbet. There were the nails piercing, and the great hammer lifted up; and I have seen in the eyes of the little children tears of sympathy—perhaps the first tears of sympathy they had ever shed. They had shed tears for their own sufferings, but it is not often that little children will weep at once for the sufferings of others. I have often thought that perhaps the first sweet offering, the

first crystal tear of sympathy, from the eyes of the little child, was an offering to the bleeding heart of Jesus Christ in the "Station of the Cross."

How beautiful, how reasonable, how useful, are all those means of enlightening the intellect and of touching the heart of man! But why all the grandeur of your great cathedrals and their functions? Why all this pomp and show? Why not communicate directly spirit to spirit? Because man is not purely a spirit. He has a body. There must be offered to God the tribute of the body in external worship. Again, man cannot, whilst he remains upon this earth, keep in constant union with the Divinity without external aids. God himself, in the magnificent temple of creation, gives us the evidences that He rejected not the beautiful in preparing this temple for His own service. Look at it in all its splendor. He created it, as the Apostle says, "that the invisible things of Him, from the beginning of the world, be clearly seen, being understood by the things that are visible, His eternal power also and His divinity." Has God rejected the beautiful in this temple of creation? Who was it, when He formed this temple, that first introduced into it sculpture, painting, poetry, music, those marvelous missionaries of the beautiful that, like the angels in the vision of sleeping Israel, bring earth and heaven into sweet union? Who was the first sculptor that struck with his chisel the marble rocks, and fashioned them as He would? Who was the first painter that touched with His brush the flowers of the valley and tinged with deep azure the ocean—that mystic baptismal font in whose waters He purified the universe, and decreed that by its waters and His spirit, man should become regenerate? Who was the first inspirer of music? Who was the first decorator, that studded with gems the Milky Way and spread this arch of splendor across the concave of this His temple? Who first told the strong sons of God to "shout with joy," and bade "the morning stars sing together," when all creation was ringing with the notes of Him, the first composer; when earth and air and heaven celebrated His praises; until the intruder sin broke the universal chorus, jarred against nature's chime, tore the harp strings of His angels; and Who, by conquering sin and death, brings back the lost melody? Who has sanctified this art of music,

NOT TO OPPRESS THE INTELLECT,

not to cloud it, not to silence it, not to lull it into a sleep fatal to its powers? No, but to sanctify, to elevate and to influence even the intellect itself, by purifying the imagination and the heart. He it was who, having inspired this glorious art, declared that Music should become in heaven itself eternal; that when all the others should, as it were, faint at the gates of heaven, when the chisel should fall from the sculptor's hand on seeing the magnificent ideals that he thought to represent; when the painter should cast away the brush in view of the glorious coloring beyond the stars; when the poet should breathe no more the song of hope, but should enjoy eternal fruition; when the architect need no more to build a house with hands in view of the eternal temple of Almighty God; when the sacred mission of all the other arts shall have been fulfilled, that then glorious Music should survive them all, and

flying in, as it were, through the gates of light, give her lessons to the angels, and the architect and the sculptor and the painter and the poet should all become for eternity the children of song.

In all of this, where is the slavery of the intellect? Hence, that man at St. Peter's should not have risen from his position, should not have broken the enchanting bonds, but have said to himself: "This Church has won my heart—has touched it in religious worship, as it was never touched before. I will try if a Church which is so beautiful, a Church which moves the depths of the human soul so marvellously, may not also satisfy my intellect, and thus it will have won at once, both powers." Thus acted the distinguished American citizen, Judge Burnett, formerly of this State, afterwards Governor of California, and now one of the most honored citizens of San Francisco, the author of that admirable book, "The Path which Led a Protestant Lawyer to the Catholic Church." He had been present at Christmas midnight mass. He had felt his heart moved in a manner, as he himself said, that he never had experienced before. He did not become a Catholic because he was so influenced, as that would be illogical; but he continued to examine; and when his intellect was convinced, after his heart was moved, then he bowed that intellect—and it is a noble one—he bowed both intellect and heart to the influence of the Truth and Beauty of the Catholic Church.

In this there is nothing illogical nor degrading. Hence there is no slavery in the Church's use of ceremonies, in the Church's use of the arts in her worship of God, as means that will bring the soul nearer to God, which means are in harmony with certain powers of the soul herself. And what can be more appropriate than to offer the tribute of all that is beautiful in nature and art at the footstool of the throne of the God of the Beautiful! Whatever brings the soul nearer to God, in such a manner as to be affected, by the influence of God upon its powers, that is to be embraced, that is to be used. Nor is there danger of idolatry in all this. No man is absurd enough to suppose that in the use of these statues and pictures, we will regard them as deities. The thing is too absurd. Indeed, it is beginning to be regarded as absurd by the most intelligent Protestants of the day, who very easily, I think, understand that in the use of these objects of worship there is little or no fear of our being so ridiculous as to mistake them for deities!

CATHOLICS DO NOT BELIEVE IN WORSHIPING SAINTS OR IMAGES.

Again, the Church does not degrade religion, by placing any creature on the throne of God. God alone she adores. Catholics do not believe that the Blessed Virgin, or any saint, or all the saints together, can receive anything like the slightest act of adoration. Adoration is due to God alone. "The Lord thy God thou shalt adore." It were HIGH TREASON AGAINST the first archangel of heaven—between God and that sweet Virgin Mary.

THE KING OF KINGS to place any one upon his throne. Between God and who was so near to him in life, there must be (in the sense of divinity) an infinite distance, for this reason, that the Divinity is infinitely above all his creatures. Whatever these creatures have, he gave them. The Blessed Virgin and the saints are but the works of his hands. He is the Infinite and Eternal God, and no Catholic believes that any of these creatures should be worshipped as the infinite and eternal God is worshipped. All that they have, they have received from Him. They shine by His reflected light. He is a jealous God. He will not give His glory to another. True; but He cannot be jealous of these creatures of His, no matter how exalted they may be, as these creatures acknowledge Him, and we confess that all that they have, must come from Him. Can you imagine an artist jealous of his own picture—a picture that he himself has executed? Suppose you are praising the picture, can you imagine the artist coming to you and saying: "Don't praise the picture, praise me?" Would you not say: "Why, sir, I am praising you in your picture." Can you imagine an author jealous of his own book? And if persons praise it, is it any derogation from the praise due to him? Can you imagine an architect jealous of the stately building that he himself has designed? No. You would say, this is mere folly indeed. Neither can God be jealous of any honor given to these creatures, as creatures. They are the books of which he is the author; they are the paintings, as it were, of which he is the artist; they are the splendid buildings of which he is the architect; and, therefore, there is no degradation of religion, no exalting of any creature whatever to the place of God, because, between him and the highest creature there is this infinite distance. And, therefore, the charge falls to the ground, when we know that Catholics do not believe that the Blessed Virgin ought to be worshipped as if she were a goddess; when we know that Catholics do not believe that any honor can be given to her, or to any saint, independently of the Deity, and that all the glory they have is but the reflected glory of the most high God!

Let us suppose for a moment, as some one has suggested, that after Washington had achieved the liberties of the American people, he comes forward upon the platform before them. They are cheering him, their deliverer; and let us suppose that Washington's mother comes out upon the platform and some one says: "Let us cheer the mother that gave us such a son." Do you think Washington would be jealous of the honor given to his own mother, and given her chiefly because she was his mother, because of him? And wherefore shall our Divine Lord be jealous of the honor given to his mother, when that honor is given especially because she was his mother?

"But you pray so long to the Blessed Virgin and the Saints, and sometimes pray but for a short time, to Almighty God. Is not this an evidence that you are thinking more of these creatures of God than you are of God himself?"

It is not the length of time that we spend in praying that determines the character of the prayer. One bending of the knee in adoration, which

must be offered to God alone, is a higher act of worship than if one were a century praying without adoration. If the Catholic performs acts of worship that mislead the non-Catholic you must remember that the character of the worship is to be judged by the doctrine; not the doctrine by the worship. You must have first the key to what the Catholic means by these external expressions, either in action or in word, before you understand, and certainly before you condemn, this external action. I may bow the knee without intending adoration. In the old English Book of Common Prayer, in the Protestant marriage service, the bridegroom uses the words, if I remember rightly: "With this ring I thee wed, and with my body I thee worship." Now, if some one said to him, "Do you really mean to adore this creature? You say you worship her." "Oh, no," he will say. "You must first understand what I mean by worship. Words are words. It is the meaning attached to the word, and it is by that meaning I have to be judged. I honor her. It does not mean here such worship as you imagine." Formerly, in the religious sense of the term, men adored, as the term implies, by placing the hand to the mouth, and then towards the statue—*ad os*, to the mouth; so, kissing hands was supreme adoration. It is not now, of course, supreme adoration. The external act, then, must be interpreted by the internal intention, and the internal intention by what is the teaching of the Church on the subject.

There is no Catholic who believes that it would not be idolatry and blasphemy to offer to any being that supreme worship that is due to God alone; and hence he cannot have any intention of adoration in these otherwise indifferent acts. He may indeed spend a long time in asking the saints or the Blessed Virgin to pray for him, but he well knows it is only God that can bestow upon him what he wants; as a man that desires an office from the President knows that it is only the President can give it, but he may spend a long time in conversation with some dear friend of the President, and you do not conclude from this that he thinks this friend can do more for him than the President can! He is only interesting the friend to go to the President to ask the favor for him. So they ask the saints to pray for them, as non-Catholics ask one another's prayers. Thus when you know what Catholics really do believe upon these subjects, you will find no difficulty in understanding how rational that faith is, and how far from degrading.

WHAT CATHOLICS DO NOT BELIEVE ABOUT RELICS.

"But here," says another, "are inanimate objects. These inanimate objects are honored in the same manner, and are even said to perform miracles. Now, if inanimate objects perform miracles, there must be a divinity in these inanimate objects; therefore you deify the object. You suppose that in that old bone of a saint, or in that old crucifix, there is a power to perform mir-

acles, and here is surely idolatry. Here is certainly a derogation from the honor which should be given to Almighty God; and here it is worse than in the case of the Blessed Virgin or the saints, because they are rational and holy beings, but here is an inanimate, vile object of the earth, to which you attribute the power of performing miracles."

Miracles are perpetually performed, it is said, by these objects in the hands of saints, and a great many stories, sometimes very amusing ones, are told of the number and manner and marvelous character of these miracles. Suppose, I relate to you a few more of these pious stories, then proceed to illustrate the subject.

Once there was a pious, credulous people, and in their country there lived an old saint in a hermitage, near the banks of a lake, apart from the world, with only one lay brother. One day this saint took a walk by the banks of the lake. He saw a woodman felling a tree. The hatchet of the poor man fell into the lake, and the saint, with a marvelous facility for performing miracles by the aid of inanimate objects, took a little twig from a tree, coaxed the hatchet up, and gave it to the woodman, who went on his way rejoicing. The saint returned home; and after he had returned to his home, he found there a poor widow, who came with the request that he should go and raise her child to life. She supposed he could do any thing that he pleased! The saint was fatigued probably after his walk, and didn't wish to go, so he called to the lay brother and said, "Brother, take this walking-stick of mine and with it revive this poor woman's child." After a while the saint died—for saints will die, too—and they buried h.m. In the open grave of the saint another body was subsequently placed. The saint who was very fond of solitude during his life rather rejoiced in it after death, and didn't want this man in the same grave with him. Therefore, with the same facility for performing miracles, his inanimate body brought the man to life without being restored to life itself, and sent him on his way rejoicing.

Now, in the same country there lived another saint, and as the people were grievously affected by snakes, this saint, who was not as cruel to the snakes as a certain Irish saint who expelled them all, erected a large cross, something like the mission cross that you may see outside or inside of certain churches, and told the people when they were bitten by the snakes that they should look at the cross, and they would be cured; and it is said that they were. This saint had a box made, in which he placed some relics, and told the people that they must take great care of the box, that it would always protect them, and when they went to fight they must bear it with them. Their enemies, however, got hold of the box on one occasion, but they were soon very glad to return it to these simple, good people, as it tormented them. And there lived amongst them later on another saint, who performed miracles, not merely by the use of inanimate, senseless objects like these, but when he was performing miracles in one direction, his shadow was performing them in the other.

Now, in what chronicles of the middle ages, in what old monkish Lives of Saints, have I found the account of these saints performing miracles by

the aid of these inanimate objects? Where have I found this account? Substantially in the Protestant Bible, and, of course, in the Catholic Bible, too. Elisha, the prophet, was walking by the banks of a river; a man was felling trees, and the axe fell into the water. The prophet, by the aid of the little twig, brought up the iron till it swam upon the surface, and he then returned it to the grateful woodman. There was a widow whose one child was dead, and Elisha, as he is called in the Protestant, Eliseus in the Catholic Bible, did not go at first to raise the child, but called his man and said, "Take my staff," (which, after all, was his walking stick), "and lay it upon the face of the child." Elisha was also, the inhospitable buried saint, whose dead bones (relics) restored the intruder to life. But who was the saint that erected the large cross to protect the people from the biting of the snakes? Who but Moses, who erected the brazen serpent that was to symbolize the cross, and told the people when bitten by the serpents, to look at that brazen serpent, and they would be healed? And what was the box of relics but the ark of the covenant, with the rod of Aaron, with the vessel of manna, with the tables of the law, with those venerable relics?—all inanimate objects! And who was the saint whose shadow (not even an inanimate object) performed miracles, but St. Peter; for we are told in the Acts of the Apostles that people brought their sick that his shadow might fall upon them. So the Catholic believes nothing in regard to these subjects substantially different from what the Protestant must admit—which is not contained in the Bible of God. Nor can even the rationalist object, if he admit the existence of God and His angels. God could use these inanimate objects, as he uses animate objects. What is the difference to him between the first spirit in heaven and the humblest inanimate object on earth? Both being creatures must be infinitely beneath him. It is only a question of the difference between two little things.

Therefore is there nothing irrational in supposing that God, for his own ends—sometimes those ends are patent, sometimes they are concealed—but there is nothing irrational in supposing that God can act through these external objects. These relics do not perform the miracles. God acts through them. God uses them, just as He uses men; there is no divinity in them. God uses them simply as instruments. Surely God can do just as he pleases with His own creatures, in the manner that He pleases, when He pleases, and no man dare ask Him why. I may add, in passing, when we hear of those marvellous things, of miracles, and visions, and so forth, the Catholic does not believe that he is bound to accept them all. What! Every notion of every excitable old lady, or young lady; every fancy of every intensified, highly-wrought mind! No! these reported miracles have to be examined, as Dr. Newman remarks, upon the **VERY SAME LAWS OF EVIDENCE** by which any other facts are examined. I examine the reported fact; I bring to it the ordinary laws of evidence; I reject or accept it upon evidence brought before me, admitting, of course, the possibility of Almighty God performing a miracle—the possibility, but not the fact, until it shall have been proved. Hence there is no degradation of either reason or religion.

THE CONFESSIONAL IS NOT WHAT ENEMIES BELIEVE IT TO BE.

Neither is it true, that the Old Church tends to demoralize the individual or the national conscience, by her use of that power which God gave to his apostles upon the very day of his resurrection, when he said: "Whose sins ye shall forgive they are forgiven them."

The confessor is simply God's agent, and just as the clergyman, who baptizes the child, washes out the original sin that was upon the soul of the child—as the Protestant clergyman, or the layman, or whoever baptizes the child, washes away this original sin from the soul of the child, doing it as God's agent—so the priest forgives the actual sin, but only as God's agent. The power given to him is a delegated power; he cannot exercise it beyond the limits assigned by him who delegated it.

Now, Almighty God will not forgive a man's sins without sorrow for them and necessary reparation for their effects, and determination to enter on a new life. The priest can never forgive the sins of a man who is not truly contrite. The priest has no power over such a soul. If the priest had this tremendous power to forgive sins as he pleased, then the confessional should be abolished in every civilized country. Then it would demoralize any people on the face of God's earth; then it would, indeed, lessen man's horror of sin. The absurd, the blasphemous position that a man could do what the eternal God himself will not do—forgive the sins of a man who is not sorry for them, who will not amend his life and make reparation to property or character for injury done; to suppose this would be, indeed, to suppose all that is popularly supposed by Protestants as held in the Catholic doctrine of confession. Nor is there any fatal facility of obtaining pardon; because the Catholic, in order to obtain pardon, has to do all that the Protestant has to do, before he goes to confession at all. He must be sorry for his sin, he must purpose amendment, he must go through all these preparations of the soul, in order to fit himself for confession! Hence there is no fatal facility, no lessening of the horror due to sin, as these dispositions are required from every one who goes to confession. The discipline is universal.

Look at that old man, over eighty-five years of age, moving towards that barefoot monk in the confessional. This old man kneels down before the monk, and says: "Bless me, father, for I have sinned. I confess to Almighty God," and so forth, "that I have sinned. Through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault." He tells his sins, and the priest must be assured that he is sorry for them. Who is this old man, thus humbled? Who is this man that falls at the feet of the poor monk? Pope Pius IX himself! He has to go to confession; he has to be sorry for his sins, and the priest would be bound, at the peril of his eternal salvation, to send even him away from the tribunal, unless—if you can imagine such a thing—he were not certain that he had the necessary dispositions. Wonderful Church! which while it exalts the office, ever humbles the man! This discipline is universal, and therefore the individual conscience is not demoral-

ized by this practice, and, by consequence, neither is the conscience of a people. Hear the testimony of a man as to the effect of the confessional, not only on the individual soul, but on the nation also. Hear one, who is unexceptional as such a witness, who entertained the deepest and most intense hatred of religion that ever burned in infidel heart; but who knew, from his own experience when he used to go to confession, and when, perhaps, he was pure and good, the value of the confessional upon his soul. This witness is Voltaire himself. He says:

“There is no more wise institution than that of confession. The most of mankind, guilty of crimes, are naturally tormented with remorse. The lawgivers who established mysteries and expiations, were equally anxious to prevent the criminals, under the influence of despair, from rushing recklessly into new crimes. Confession is an excellent thing—a bridle on inveterate crimes. It is excellent for disposing hearts, ulcerated with hatred, to forgive; and the unjust to repair the injuries they may have done to their neighbor. The enemies of the Roman Church, who oppose so salutary an institution, have taken away from man the greatest check that can be imagined on iniquity. The wise men of antiquity have all recognized its importance. The Catholic religion has consecrated that of which God permitted human wisdom to perceive the advantage and embrace its shadows.”

Leibnitz, one of the greatest men that Protestantism or any other ism can boast of—the equal of Sir Isaac Newton in physical science, and his superior in almost every other department—speaks of confession in terms which might be employed by the most devoted frequenter of the sacred tribunal.

If Catholic nations seem sometimes morally degraded, depend on it, that the immoral people who bring disgrace on them, are not the people who go to confession, but often the infidel radicals who denounce it. Left under its sacred influence, they would be very different indeed, if they lamented before God their sins, and received the salutary counsel which they cannot receive until they have resolved to become new creatures.

Never shall I forget the evidences that I once saw and heard of the stability of this Church, in her war against the powers of hell, of which one is this very misrepresentation of which I have been complaining. It was in Rome, in 1867; and with his description I shall close this already too prolonged lecture. On that occasion, the EIGHTEEN HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY of the death of St. Peter, we were assembled in the magnificent Basilica that bears his name. Five hundred bishops gathered around the Sovereign Pontiff—bishops from every tribe and nation upon earth. There he stood, the Supreme Pontiff, the great central figure. Forty thousand wax lights illuminated the magnificent assembly. The sculptured saints of eighteen centuries looked down from their niches and from the tombs around, upon us. The vast Basilica was crowded to its utmost capacity. The papal choir, near the grand altar, commenced to sing these words, “Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church,” and when these one hundred voices seemed to have exhausted all their power and beauty of melody,

three hundred voices above the entrance to St. Peter's continued the text, "I will build my Church," and the two choirs united, and then four hundred voices—the Chorus Angelorum—in the dome, "that vast and wondrous dome, to which Diana's marvel was a cell," continued this text, and in the end the basso voices commencing, and the whole magnificent ocean of melody surging onward, they sang, "And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it—*Portae inferi, non praevalent.*" We heard the *non* at the altar; we heard it above the distant portals; we heard it ringing round and round the dome. That text sounded in my mind that day as the announcement of a fact—of a challenge—of a prophecy. There, above the tomb of Peter; there, where the hostile powers had met for eighteen hundred years; there, where they had measured lances, these powers of hell and the old, united Church—the misrepresented, but still glorious Church—these words sounded like the announcement of the fact that after eighteen hundred years of fighting she was still victorious. They rang out like a challenge, as if she said: "Come forth and fight the battle for eighteen centuries more if you wish it," and of a prophecy that that battle should end victoriously for her because of God's great promise! Oh, glorious Church of the living God! Oh, only divine institution upon earth! In all thy power, in all thy unity, in all thy beauty, calumniated but not less lovely, here is the sanction for thy continuance, here the communicated life of God, that gives the vitality and which will crown thee with victory forevermore. "On this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH DOES NOT DENY THE BIBLE TO THE PEOPLE.

Nor is it true that the Church enslaves reason, by keeping from it the means of forming a judgment. She does not hide the Scriptures from the people. She was the guardian of the Scriptures, from the beginning. Her monks of old most industriously translated them. To them, humanly speaking, we owe their preservation, as we owe the preservation of the classics. She does not, indeed, approve of scattering the Old Testament, with some of its passages, concerning unnatural crimes, etc., among the children, but she does not, and never did, forbid the people to read the Word of God. She condemns the spurious editions of the Scriptures. She had to protect those oracles of God from corruption, but never did she hide them from the people; on the contrary, that she recommends her children to read them is evident from what you will see in many of the Catholic Bibles which are for sale in our book-stores. In every Catholic book-store there are many editions of the Bible of various sizes and prices; in them are recommendations to study them, and in many of those Bibles there is a letter from Pope Pius VI to the Most Reverend Anthony Martini Archbishop of Florence, on his translation of the Holy Bible into Italian. The Pope says: "Beloved son, at a time when a vast number of books which most grossly attack the Catholic religion are circulated, even among the unlearned, to the great danger of souls, you

judge exceedingly well that the faithful should be excited to the reading of the Holy Scriptures; for these are the most abundant sources which ought to be left open to every one to draw from them purity of morals and of doctrine, to eradicate the errors which are so widely disseminated in these corrupt times." So there evidently is no prohibition on the part of any Church authority, that the people should read these oracles of Almighty God. The Church interprets what needs interpretation for her people. Does that lessen the dignity of the Scriptures? Does that enslave the intellect? The Scriptures themselves tell us that in them there are things "difficult to be understood which the weak and unlearned wrest to their own destruction." Hence, as there are difficulties in them, and as they need an interpreter of those difficulties, this interpreter is given. Are the laws of Missouri degraded because there is a Supreme Court to interpret them? Does the fact that there are judges to interpret prevent the people from reading the laws? Does the fact that there are judges to interpret lessen the dignity of the people—lessen the sanction of the laws? And so there is no injustice done to the Catholic intellect in providing what every state in the world has provided, in order to have unity in that state—some one to interpret the laws. Hence it is false that the Church enslaves the human intellect by taking from it the means of discovering the truth, for she recommends these divine oracles—for she preserved these divine oracles—for she interprets, being constituted by Him Who said: "Go forth and teach all nations; I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world. As the Father sent Me I send you. All power is given to me in heaven and on earth." "He who hears you, hears me." "Go and teach all nations; I am with you until the consummation of ages." "He that will not hear the Church, let him be as the heathen and the publican."

Now, he did not remain with those twelve men as individuals, but as a corporate body, which he constituted as the supreme court in spirituals to interpret his law and to decide disputes. He spoke to those men themselves, of their own deaths in the future; and yet he said: "I am with you until the consummation of ages." Because, as in the Congress of the United States, when one man dies another takes his place, and the powers given to the original Congress are retained by the Congress of today, though there is not one man of those who were members of that original Congress alive; so in this apostolic college when one died another took his place. When Judas prevaricated and killed himself, Matthias was elected, and Matthias was as much an apostle as Judas had been. When another died another took his place, so that the apostolic body still remains, until today, unshorn of a single apostolic power—remains to judge, remains to interpret, remains to decide disputes. Almighty God provided amongst the Jewish people a tribunal to settle disputes that should arise amongst them; a tribunal or supreme court for deciding the interpretation of His law. In the Book of Deuteronomy they were ordered to go to the high priest when there was a dispute concerning the meaning of the law, and when the high priest decided it, it was death to contradict his decision. So that they had their supreme court; and shall it be said that Christianity is worse off than Judaism? Shall it be said that

there is no authority left upon this earth to settle a man's doubts and difficulties? The Jew had it. Plato asked for it when he said that a man could never be certain on religious questions, until God Himself would speak. God, or some one whom Almighty God would preserve from error in teaching, must speak; and therefore there is constituted in the Catholic Church this supreme deciding power—supreme court in spirituals. Hence the unity of the Church; hence the power of the Church; hence that marvellous combination of the most discordant elements; hence the men from north and south and east and west, of every tribe and tongue and people—three hundred million believing in every iota of the same truths, because when there was a question of doubt there was left an authority to decide; and, as there would be anarchy in the State of Missouri in a month if the supreme court were abolished, so there is anarchy in the various organizations outside the Old Church, dividing and subdividing; essentially so, because the very principle of union, the deciding power, is wanting. That power exists in the Catholic Church; therefore is it that in the young and energetic nations, in spite of all the opposition and misrepresentation, she is gradually gaining hold upon them, and no amount of scientific investigation, and no reformation, nor changes in religion—nothing, can shake the united force of that marvellous organization, united by this supreme deciding power.
