

DEFENDS THE A. P. A.

A LUCID EXPLANATION OF ITS ORIGIN, AIM AND METHODS.

A Forceful and Exhaustive Article by the Rev. James B. Dunn, in the Chelsea, Mass., Telegraph and Pioneer.

No institution that civilization ever gave birth to has challenged so much attention, given rise to so much comment, excited so much opposition or called forth so much abuse and vituperation as the American Protective Association.

If I may judge from what some of its critics say of it, republican institutions are certainly menaced, and unless something is done and that speedily to check the progress of that organization and destroy it, our liberties will be destroyed.

With reference to the American Protective Association I think I know as much about its origin, its aims, its principles and methods as any person outside of the order is likely to know.

After thus carefully studying the subject I would say to those who rail against it and demand its overthrow, and as some do call for the punishment of its members, with Gamelle on another occasion, "Refrain from these men, and let them alone; for if this course or this work be of me it will come to naught; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found fighting against God."

(1.) As to its origin. Some of its critics, like the New York Times, say "it was started some eight years ago in Boston. But somehow it did not thrive well in the shadow of Bunker Hill, and when it died its projectors carried it out west." Debs, president of the A. R. U. says it was started some three years ago in an office in Wall street, New York, by some railroad magnates for the purpose of breaking up the labor unions.

The responsibility for the organization of the A. P. A. rests upon the Roman Catholic hierarchy in America, not for what that church had done or taught 300 years ago, but for what that church through its hierarchy was doing in the United States in this nineteenth century and in these later days.

A few years ago some liberty-loving citizens seeing that the trend of things was to the fulfillment of Rome's prediction, that she had already taken the outposts of republicanism, that our great cities, with few exceptions she had captured, and by her agents she had to a great extent manipulated the press and secured, if not for its advocacy, its silence; for the American encyclopedia she had revised the history of her intrigues and persecutions; and to suit her wishes our great dictionary had been mutilated in its definitions, just as the truths of history she had suppressed and perverted in our text books; and had made terms with party leaders so as to secure grants of land and money and annual subsidies in the shape of charities. Seeing how the church through her hierarchy thus

menaced our liberties and national institutions, including our free school system, to overthrow which she was exerting every force at her command, some true loyal Americans formed what is termed the American Protective Association. I will briefly refer to some of the criticisms against it.

(1.) Religious discrimination. The enemies of the order bring the charge on this, saying it is un-American and unconstitutional to vote against a man because of his religion. Such critics must either be ignorant of the constitution of the country for years voted against Mormons on account of their religion, and that finally congress, by solemn statute, made polygamy a crime, notwithstanding polygamy was a fundamental dogma of the Mormon church? The people of Utah and Arizona have been voting for these many years to keep the Mormons out of office solely on account of their religion. Why have not the clerical critics of the A. P. A. denounced such conduct? Are these critics also ignorant of the fact that the United States supreme court has decided that the laws of one of our states disfranchising Mormons is constitutional on the theory that the man who takes the oath the Mormons are required to take, cannot be a good citizen?

If the argument of the critics as to Catholics is sound, then this partisan hostility to the Mormons and the congressional legislation against them; and this supreme court decision is unconstitutional. It will not do for the critics to answer that polygamy is not a religion, but an offense against modern civilization, because if they do, then they must allow the American Protective Association to stand on like ground and reply that Romanism is not a religion it is politics, at least the Romanism to which they object, that is a system of the darkest political intrigue and despotism, cloaking itself to avoid attack under the sacred name of religion.

I know that some of the Protestant clerical upholders of Romanism say it is not a political system, but a religious sect. This only shows how little they know of the system. That Romanism is a political system, despotic in its organization, anti-American, anti-republican, anti-everything that is meant by freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, freedom of the press, and especially free schools, must be apparent to every unprejudiced student of that system. Romanism does not acknowledge the right of the people to govern, but claims for itself the supreme right to govern all people and all rulers by divine right.

It does not tolerate the liberty of the press, it takes advantage indeed of our liberty of the press to use its own press against our liberty, but it proclaims in the thunders of the vatican, and with a voice which it pronounces infallible and unchangeable that "it is a liberty never sufficiently to be execrated and detested." It does not tolerate liberty of conscience nor liberty of opinion. The one is denounced by the sovereign pontiff as "a most pestiferous error," and the other "a pest most of all others to be dreaded in a state."

Now these are political tenets, not religious, yet they are held and taught by the hierarchy in close union with the church's faith. Let the hierarchy separate these, or if they cannot or will not, then let the hierarchy cease to whine about religious persecution.

(2.) But it is said the A. P. A. is un-American. What is American? What is Americanism? I believe America stands for liberty of speech, free political action, non-interference with religious convictions, entire separation of church and state, freedom of the press, free schools, a free people, government of the people, by the people and for the people. Americanism I take it to mean loyalty to American institutions (irrespective of nativity) opposition to foreign intervention in American affairs.

Now in the light of this definition, examine the principles of the American Protective Association. The principles as adopted by that association, and set forth in the declarations of its supreme councils, and I challenge any one to deny their thorough Americanism. Here are the principles summarized: Restriction of immigration, an educational qualification for suffrage, one general non-sectarian free public school system, no appropriation of public fund or public property to sectarian purposes, taxation of all property not owned and controlled by the public, public official inspection of all scholastic and reformatory institutions, the election to office of only such as owe their primal civil allegiance to their country's constitution and flag.

and pauper immigration be stopped, that every voter should be able to read and write in the language of the nation, then the A. P. A. is un-American.

But it is unconstitutional it is said by its critics. It discriminates they say against the religion of the Roman Catholic citizen. I have already shown that the A. P. A. is not opposed to him on account of his religion. Its clerical defamers know that neither in Massachusetts nor elsewhere in the United States do men vote against Romanists on the ground that they believe in the immaculate conception, transubstantiation, purgatory, extreme unction, or any other similar doctrine, but because they are being led by the hierarchy to use their office and exercise their suffrage to further the interests of the church and not the country.

These defamers of the A. P. A. and apologists for Romanists have nothing to say about the well-known and undeniable fact to which we have already alluded, that the papal hierarchy aim to overthrow our civil institutions, founded upon the will of the people, and to reconstruct and found them upon the will of the pope. They seem to be ignorant of the fact, or if they know it, they suppress it, viz., that Pope Leo XIII exhorts all Catholics to take an active part in all municipal affairs and elections, and to make themselves felt, as active elements in daily political life, and to do all in their power to cause the constitutions of states and legislatures to be modelled in the principles of the true church.

When the nation's safety is thus menaced, her institutions imperilled, and an organization springs up to protect what has been purchased by blood, is it sane for any one to claim that it is unconstitutional? The order denies no person his political and religious liberty. To perpetuate this liberty is one of its cardinal principles. The fact is it is only by misrepresenting its principles and objects that a plea can be made against its constitutionality. No such plea can be made so long as facts and truths are adhered to.

The order never has, so say its authorized expounders—and I believe them—and does not now, deny any one the sacred privilege of worshipping God in any manner he may choose.

The critics of the A. P. A. ought to go to the root of the matter. The average citizen looks with disgust and alarm at the condition of things in the nation. He knows it is the veriest bosh to deny that Roman Catholics in this country have not been claiming and also getting more than they are justly entitled to in proportion to their population. There is not a large city in the land, unless perhaps it is Philadelphia, that is not under bondage to the Roman church, and where 90 per cent. of the offices, especially the high salaried, are not filled by the members of that church. Even Dr. Washington Gladden, who has so roundly condemned the A. P. A.—about which he knows little or nothing—if he had been honest would have found plenty of material out of which to frame an indictment against that church, and grounds for such an organization as the A. P. A. for he says: "For one I confess that I cannot look with complacency upon the attitude of some of the Roman Catholic leaders toward the public schools, and their attempts to use the municipal machinery for their own purposes, when they have the power, are not reassuring." Ab, Dr. Gladden, as well as every other clerical apologist who says religion has no place in American politics, must be blind indeed if they do not know that the most marvellous political machine in the world today is the Roman church, and there is not a politician in the country who dare antagonize it. No other church as such takes any part in politics, but the church of Rome does, and maintains, as is well known, a perpetual lobby at Washington, and so successful has been that lobbying, that for years the Roman Catholic sect numbering less than 8,000,000, has been getting nearly two-thirds of all government appropriation for Indian education, and all other religious sects and those of no religion, numbering together 55,000,000, get but little over one-third. Such being the case, what folly to talk about the A. P. A. dragging religion into politics. Religion has already got control of politics and the mission of the A. P. A. is to drive her out of politics, and place her in the holy and supreme realm where she properly belongs.

A few words as to its methods: It is a secret society, and as such naturally comes in for all the condemnation that falls to the lot of any secret society. It is clear, however, that unless such a society is treasonable or dangerous to the safety and peace of a community, by its principles or methods, it has a right to exist. There is nothing in law or common justice to prevent men from combining in organization for any definite object, and maintaining their meetings, plans and deliberations in secret if they so choose.

Much as we may think that secrecy is an unfortunate adjunct to any political movement, if there are citizens of this free republic who think differently, they have an inalienable right to do so, and form any secret society they please, and I am free to confess that if a secret society is in place at all, it is in place against the plottings of that hoary

secret society, which the Encyclopedia Britannica says "whose hill is at Rome and whose point is everywhere." Strange isn't it that many of those who denounce the A. P. A. because it is a secret order, have nothing to say about the order of the Jesuits, the most infamous and crime-stained organization that this planet has ever seen; an order which exists today unhampered by law in these states, and yet has been driven out of almost every state in Europe and Spanish America. Why is it that men can swallow the Clan-na-Gaels, the Hibernians, the Foresters, the Knights of St. John and heaven knows how many more, and yet make such a wry face on the appearance of the American Protective Association? Why is it that they expend all their energies in denouncing the A. P. A. and have nothing but honeyed words for the "auxiliaries of the church."

The critics make much also of the documents which they say are issued by the A. P. A. There is no question but that many connected with the order have done and said foolish things, and that there are some lecturers in the field who are fomenting religious intolerance that they may gain thereby. But the fact that injudicious words and deeds in some places accompany this movement is no more argument against it than many a fool and fanatic has taken it upon himself to advance the cause of religion or religious liberty, by methods any other than commendable. Had these critics taken such steps as every honest person would have taken who desired to discuss a subject fairly, the steps that I took, viz., to write to the official authorities of the organizations as to the authenticity of said documents, they would have learned what I learned, that the organization had no more to do with the preparation and circulation of such fake documents than they had, and ought not therefore to be held responsible for them.

But again it is said, the members of the order have to take oath never to trade with, nor to employ a Roman Catholic. Those who ought to know tell me this is not so. People leave out qualifying words, and garble sentences quite often to suit their purpose. I know members of the order that do employ Roman Catholics and trade with Roman Catholics. I say I know this.

But let us look on the other side. Let us go into any Catholic home in this city that employs help, and let us see how things stand. How many Protestants do you suppose you would find? Very few I venture to say. And suppose you investigate the firms and establishments employing help. I know not how it may be in Chelsea, but I know of Roman Catholic firms in Boston, Lynn and Cambridge where Catholic help, and that only, are employed; the proprietors say they must look out for their "own people" first.

The facts are, wherever Roman Catholics come into the control of manufacturing establishments they weed out Protestant employees and substitute Catholics, and whenever they are elected or appointed to office, they remove wherever possible all Protestant clerks and fill their places with their own creed, and now when the tables are being turned, and their own dearly beloved boycott is threatened to be used against them, they whine and whine, and cry out bigotry.

While the A. P. A., though founded in honesty and erected upon patriotism, like all other immense regenerative organizations is liable to err, and doubtless has erred, yet no unprejudiced observant of its history will gainsay the fact that that organization, the people in many sections of the country are indebted for many of the official reforms that have taken place in the last two or three years. Truly, if a tree may be judged by its fruits, the A. P. A. has yielded an abundant harvest both of patriotism and of good government. What matter that it was cultivated in secret and nurtured in obscurity. Its works remain, and speak for themselves. Let the people judge whether, like the baron fig tree in the parable, it deserves to be hewn down and cast into the fire.

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