

position in Church, or State, or human society, and therefore acts as God's delegate, the oath he administers carries with it implicitly the condition that nothing sinful shall be required of the person sworn. The moment that anything is asked of me that I am sincerely convinced is sinful, I am not only justified in neglecting the oath I have taken, but I am bound to do so under pain of sin, or to speak correctly, the oath vanishes as soon as such a case occurs, because it was in the first instance accompanied by the implicit condition of its requirements being lawful.

But the Masonic oath is unlawful, because it is of its own nature totally unconditional. There is an assurance, it is alleged, given to every English Freemason before he is initiated that nothing will be required of him at variance with his loyalty to the Crown, his duty as a good citizen, or the tenets of whatever religion he professes. But an unconditional oath is not made conditional by the comforting assurance preceding it. It is none the less a leap in the dark. If I bind myself to work at a certain trade with the implied condition that I may give it up as soon as I find I am losing money by it, this is a very different thing from being first assured that it will be very profitable, and then binding myself unconditionally. The first is not a rash venture, the second necessarily is. If I neglect the conditional oath on the non-fulfilment of the condition, I do not in any way break the oath. If I neglect the unconditional oath, I violate the oath, whatever the circumstances may be which lead to its violation.

Let us suppose that an English Mason visits Italy, and there, in a Masonic lodge, he hears the discussion of a proposal to "remove" some obnoxious statesman who is the friend of religion and the enemy of revolution and secret societies. The visitor is a Conservative Englishman, a religious man as far as his knowledge goes, a friend of law and order. He listens aghast, and his first impulse is to warn the intended victim. But then comes the thought of his Masonic oath, which, in spite of English disclaimers of the atheistic proceedings of the Paris and Italian lodges, binds him to inviolable secrecy respecting the plots of the villains. It is of no use for him to urge that he was informed before joining in England that he never would be required to act against his conscience or to violate his duty as a good citizen. What care the Carbonari for the futile disclaimers of their English brethren? If he protests too loudly, their hands play significantly about the handles of their stilettos, and a friend warns him to be careful not to be out alone after dark.

3. It is the boast of English Freemasonry that it unites in one common worship all who believe in the Supreme Architect of the Universe, that it presents the spectacle of men, divided in a thousand points of doctrine, setting aside their religious differences and worshipping in union that God, whom under various aspects and under circumstances widely different, they one and all adore. Here we find the third great vice inherent in Freemasonry—it is essentially a non-Christian society, recognising a religion, which, as the common religion of the various members of the lodge, necessarily excludes Jesus Christ altogether from its services, its prayers, its formulas of consecration, its solemn acts of ritual, and makes no mention of Him in the sermons and discourses of those appointed to be its chaplains. They must not even in the grace before or after meals mention the name of Christ. We wonder how those who call themselves Christian ministers do not shrink from a system which banishes Him whom they profess to regard as their Lord and Master, their King and God, ignoring Him who is the Life of our life, whom not to acknowledge is to deny, whom to confess is eternal life, whom to reject explicitly or implicitly is eternal death. The absence of the name of Christ our Lord from all Masonic proceedings, the elimination of all mention of Him from its prayers and formularies of consecration, is enough to condemn it without any need of further witness. No loyal Christian who realises the full meaning of this single fact could ever regard Freemasonry with anything but hostility and abhorrence.

God will never accept any prayer unless it is offered to Him in the name and through the merits of His Son. If we do not confess that Son, when we kneel in supplication to His Eternal Father, when are we to confess Him? If we unite with Jews, Mahomedans and Deists when we come before the footstool of God, thrusting Jesus Christ out of sight, compelled to say nothing about Him in whom the Christian should live and move and have his being, what are we but cowards and renegades, nay, deserters to the enemy, who have no part or lot in Him? English Freemasonry, then, is essentially an anti-Christian sect, for it offers Christless prayers and as a corporate body it practically renounces Christ.

Mrs Arlidge, Leith street, Dunedin, is sole agent for Madame Demorest's famous patterns, by which ladies can become their own dressmakers. Orders for ladies' and children's clothing of all kinds will be carefully attended to by Mrs Arlidge, who is always provided with the newest fashions.

Mr W. Langford, 133 Colombo street, Christchurch, is prepared to carry out all funeral arrangements entrusted to him with strict economy, while at the same time nothing required by complete respectability is neglected.

The City Boot Palace, George and St. Andrew streets, Dunedin, should be visited by all those who are in search of genuine value for their money. Cheapness united to excellent qualities is the rule of the establishment.

DUNEDIN CATHOLIC LITERARY SOCIETY.

THE usual weekly meeting of the Dunedin Catholic Literary Society was held in the Christian Brothers' School on Wednesday, when the chair was taken by the Rev. Father Lynch.

Mr J. Kennedy, who was proposed at the previous meeting, was elected a member of the Society.

Mr Griffen gave a humorous reading, taken from Max Adeler, on "Music," which excited much laughter, and recitations were given by Mr J. Macedo and Mr J. Simmonds, both of whom acquitted themselves admirably. Mr Macedo's contribution was "Hamlet's advice to the players," which he gave in very good style. The other was a piece entitled "The Uncle," which, though very long, was well delivered, Mr Simmonds evidently having the makings of a good elocutionist in him. A paper, "On the Health of the Body," was read by Mr J. Cantwell, the composition of which was excellent. He touched on the necessity for ventilation and cleanliness, etc., and gave some very useful information on the subject, although a few of the members did not entirely agree with some of his remarks.

A vote of thanks was proposed by Mr J. Hally and seconded by Mr McKeay. Messrs Haughton, Popplewell, Carolin, J. J. Dunne, S. Simmonds, and J. Eager also spoke, all the items being very favourably criticised. Mr Cantwell, who rose to reply to the criticisms on his paper, also commented on the other items.

The matter of having a mock banquet was discussed, and it was finally decided to hold it in a fortnight's time, the arrangement of it to be left to the committee.

MORE POWER TO BALFOUR!

MR PARNELL (says the *Nation* of 25th April) has at length gone the whole hog. He throws himself at the feet of Balfour, beseeching him to accept the *quondam* Home Rule general as a bravo for the destruction of Mr Gladstone and his party. The speeches at Ballina on Monday formed one stream of panegyric on the butcher of John Mandeville and the gaoler of John Dillon and William O'Brien. "I am not at all jealous of Mr Balfour, but I say more power to his elbow as long as he is giving employment to the people of Ireland, and I hope we may be in a position to keep him to the work." More power to the elbow of the man whose grasp is on the lock that keeps two of the best sons of Ireland in gaol simply for their work in behalf of the Irish peasants! This is what Parnell has come to. Ay, but he has his reasons. He knew that the lies which his followers have been uttering about John Dillon and William O'Brien were about to be answered. He knew, moreover, that they would have nothing to do with the man who panegyrises the Michelstown murders, and whose sole policy now is to weaken the forces of the British Home Rule party. Therefore he had no hesitation about crying, "More power to Balfour" and "More power to him," for the very reason that he is the gaoler of those two Irishmen. The longer he keeps them in the better for Mr Parnell.

That is placed beyond doubt at last. Those brave Irishmen must have heard of the base uses to which Parnell was turning their consideration and tenderness for him. The rumours of his recent tactics must have reached them, and they have now authorised the most emphatic and public repudiation of the slanders that have been uttered about them to be made. Fr. Keaveney, the Administrator of Ballaghaderin, where Mr John Dillon's friends reside, and where Mrs William O'Brien is at present sojourning, has been authorised by them to make the repudiation. At the great demonstration of South Sligo men held at Gurteen on Sunday, Fr. Keaveney said that "he came there from one of the most prominent fighting districts of the country, where the principles of John Dillon vibrate in the national life, and the people were one and all in support of the Irish Nationalist party. He could tell them that those who had any doubt about the attitude of John Dillon in this struggle are making a mistake. It was the business of Parnell and his brigade of liars to try and deceive them, but their lies had gone too far, and he was in a position there to-day on the authority of John Dillon himself—almost from his own lips—to tell them, or any body of Irishmen who may doubt it, that there is not within the four seas of Ireland a man more determinedly opposed to Mr Parnell than John Dillon. And to those who shake their heads and say, 'Dillon is gone astray; we have O'Brien'—to such he had this important statement to make, that John Dillon with his own lips sent out the message which he had delivered to them and asked to have it also added that William O'Brien is at one with him in his opposition to Mr Parnell." No wonder that Parnell calls, "More power to Mr Balfour."

A letter lately received from the Right Rev. Charles Jolivet, D.D., Vicar-Apostolic of Natal, speaks of the consoling progress made by the Church in the South African colony. During the past year churches, schools, convents and so forth have been built more extensively than at any previous period. The missionary work in the colony is directed chiefly by Oblates of Mary Immaculate and Trappist monks.