

ALFRED E. SMITH, THE RELIGIOUS ISSUE.  
OKLAHOMA CITY, SEPTEMBER 20, 1928

Thesis for the Degree of Ph. D.  
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Elton H. Wallace

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David C. Ralph

Major professor

Date 10-5-65



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## ABSTRACT

ALFRED E. SMITH, THE RELIGIOUS ISSUE:  
OKLAHOMA CITY, SEPTEMBER 20, 1928

by Elton Harvey Wallace

Alfred E. Smith, a Roman Catholic, the son of Irish immigrants, a New Yorker, a "Wet," and the protege of Tammany Hall, was the candidate of the Democratic Party for the presidency of the United States in 1928. Though the Constitution had provided that "no religious test shall ever be required," he was defeated in a landslide that was widely interpreted as the result of religious bigotry.

During his colorful campaign, Smith made little reference to the religious issue until, at Oklahoma City on September 20, before an audience of 20,000, he devoted a major address to a defense of his faith and a discussion of the related social and moral issues. It was the only such speech of the campaign; it was widely broadcast, published, and reviewed; and it was delivered in an area where agitation of the issue had been intense.

The present study proposes to evaluate the unique means available to the speaker as he sought on a single occasion to surmount the social and religious barriers that



stood between himself and his hearers. The differing backgrounds of the speaker and his hearers are investigated in the areas of the social issues:

1. Catholic-Protestant relations and the alleged suppression of Catholic political aspirations.
2. The urban-rural conflict.
3. The status of the foreign-born and their sons and daughters.
4. The issue of Prohibition.
5. The issue of Tammany Hall and its corrupt practices.

The body of the speech was composed of two parts:

Part I was a defense of Smith's character and competence by means of a recital of his record. Investigation revealed that the attack upon his record and his defense of it were dealing with two very different "records." His votes and vetoes on the "moral issues" were under attack, but he responded with a defense of his elective and administrative accomplishments, which had not been challenged.

Part II sought to show the charge of Tammany corruption to be a "red herring" cloaking religious bigotry. Investigation showed that, though this was often true, hearer response, Smith's own previous example, and the later practice of John Kennedy suggest that the speaker might have been more successful had he met the issue early, openly, and with historical and theological argument, separating it



insofar as possible from the related issues and without challenging the sincerity of those who made the attack.

It was found that discussion of the religious issue: (1) stirred the conscience of many and alerted both sides to changing national conditions; (2) strengthened the Democratic Party by the addition of certain ethnic minorities; and (3) because it was widely represented as the decisive issue, contributed to the unwillingness of either party to offer another Catholic at the presidential polls for many years.

Recent studies of the 1928 campaign have concluded that Smith was one of the strongest Democratic presidential candidates in this century, whose religion, city origin, and opposition to Prohibition may have been a help to him and to his party, but, in an overwhelmingly Republican year, he was defeated from the start by the issue of prosperity.

Alfred E. Smith was one of the most effective extemporaneous speakers in the history of presidential politics, waging a powerful campaign in which religion played a minor but tempestuous role. Often attacked unfairly, and himself misjudging the nature and magnitude of the issue, he defended himself and his right to run as a "Catholic and a patriot," not always wisely, but with unquestioned candor and courage.

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by

Elton Harvey Wallace

A THESIS

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Statement of Purpose

Let me make myself perfectly clear. I do not want any Catholic in the United States of America to vote for me on the 6th of November because I am a Catholic.  
. . .

But on the other hand, I have the right to say that any citizen of this country that believes I can promote its welfare, that I am capable of steering the ship of State safely through the next four years, and then votes against me because of my religion, he is not a real, pure, genuine American.<sup>1</sup>

With this ringing peroration the Democratic candidate for the presidency expressed his philosophy of church and state, voiced his hope of election to the nation's highest office, and sought once and for all to end the debate on religion which had accompanied his candidacy.

Alfred E. Smith, son of Irish immigrants, rose from poverty to a position of power among Democratic leaders of the 20's, made of himself an acknowledged expert in the art of government, and became the only man in New York history to be four times elected to the governor's

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<sup>1</sup>Alfred E. Smith, Campaign address delivered at Oklahoma City, September 20, 1928. Verbatim report in New York Times, September 21, 1928, p. 2.



chair. The folk hero of the city streets, the incorruptible graduate of Tammany Hall, and devout son of the Church, his rise to national political eminence posed the question so vital to his twenty-four million fellow Catholics: "Can a Roman Catholic be elected to the presidency of his country?" There was no legal bar, the Constitution specifying that "no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States." But after a bitter contest in which religion was made an emotional issue, he was defeated in a landslide that buried the hopes of Catholics for a third of a century.

That religion was a factor in the election result has been admitted by nearly all. That it was the crucial and decisive factor was claimed by some, including the candidate himself. Historical studies and the experience of the 1960 campaign have combined to challenge such single-cause analysis.

The present study does not seek to review this disputed point but examines, rather, the question raised by the candidate at Oklahoma City: in elective office or at the polls, what is a "real, pure, genuine American"? Though the speaker and his hearers held a common citizenship, he found himself separated from them by barriers he could not easily surmount. Since the origin of these barriers was often obscure, and their relationship to





American politics complex, it was perhaps inevitable that religion, an issue capable of the strongest attachments and possessed of the clearest traditions, should serve as a focal point and a rallying cry for all the others as it had so often in the nation's past history.

Since American society encompasses several of the great faiths of the world, it is not surprising that conflict should have marked its delicate church-state balance from the beginning. Legal separation was made a fundamental principle of government, and it has endured for nearly two centuries; but the place of religion in politics has remained a vexed and recurring question. Sometimes the influence of one upon the other has been subtle and spoken in whispers, while at other times open conflict has produced loud domestic strife. Particularly between the Protestant majority and the largest minority group, Roman Catholicism, has there been persistent tension and the distinction both sides have commonly drawn between the religious and the political has been often fuzzy indeed.

The roots of American anti-Catholicism may be traced to England, from which the New World's settlers departed at the moment of its greatest anti-Roman feeling.<sup>1</sup> Whether Anglican or Puritan, they shared a common hatred of the Catholic Church and a resolution that the papal sway should

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<sup>1</sup>Ray Allen Billington, The Protestant Crusade, 1800-1860. (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1963), p. 1.



never be exercised on these new shores. Though such a danger at first appeared remote, Catholics at the time of the Revolution comprising only one per cent of the population,<sup>1</sup> it was with some difficulty that the constitutional provision and the first amendment were assured; and on the state statute books there remained proscriptive regulations for many years thereafter. Massachusetts did not legally separate church and state until 1833, Roman Catholics paying taxes for the support of the established church until that year. In New Hampshire, until 1877, a constitutional provision forbade Catholics to hold office.<sup>2</sup>

A wave of anti-Catholic feeling was occasioned by the great influx of Catholic immigration from Germany and Ireland in the quarter century preceding the Civil War. At the same time, Protestant revivalism, climaxing in the 1840's, invoked a heightened religious and political feeling against "popery." This era produced the Native American Party about 1835, and such publications as "The Protestant" and "The Protestant Vindicator." A Roman Catholic Church in Philadelphia was closed; a convent in Massachusetts was burned; and there were riots, fires and bloodshed.<sup>3</sup> During

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<sup>1</sup>Berton Dulce and Edward Richter, Religion and the Presidency: A Recurring American Problem (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1962), p. 6.

<sup>2</sup>Peter Condon, "Knownothingism," Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. VIII, p. 677.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



these years, only 5 per cent of the American population was Catholic; only 2.2 per cent was foreign-born, but half of these were Irish, and they bore the brunt of the Native American attack.<sup>1</sup>

"Knownothingism"--so named because, as a secret society, its members were instructed to answer all questions with "I know nothing"--was the underground but legitimate heir to Native Americanism. Founded in 1849, and dedicated to nativism and to the destruction of Catholicism in America, it moved from a policy of infiltration of the legitimate parties to one of open participation in politics. By 1856 it had elected representatives to the United States Congress and entered a candidate in the campaign for the presidency.<sup>2</sup> One of the aims expressed in its charter was "to place in all offices of honour, trust or profit in the gift of the people or by appointment none but Native American Protestant citizens."<sup>3</sup>

The Civil War, bringing other problems to the fore, ushered in a period of respite, but the fires of intolerance were not quenched. New floods of immigration, this time from southern and eastern Europe, renewed Protestant fears of Roman control and gave birth, about 1887, to a new

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<sup>1</sup>Dulce and Richter, p. 31.

<sup>2</sup>Theodore Roemer, The Catholic Church in the United States (St. Louis: B. Herder Co., 1950), p. 240.

<sup>3</sup>Condon, p. 677.



organized opposition--the American Protective Association.<sup>1</sup> Founded by Henry F. Bowers of Clinton, Iowa, it remained a disturbing factor in most northern states until the end of the century. According to its constitution, the association sought "at all times to endeavor to place the political positions of this government in the hands of Protestants to the entire exclusion of the Roman Catholics."<sup>2</sup>

In the early 1920's the revived Ku Klux Klan sustained a membership estimated at 4,000,000, and a political influence far greater than even this numerical strength would suggest. To the white supremacy tenet which had dominated the original Klan, the new organization added an emphasis upon anti-Catholicism, which it was prepared to agitate by all the means at its command. Its notorious participation in local and state elections was climaxed by nation-wide activity in 1924 and 1928, when it joined forces with other elements to block the election of Alfred E. Smith.

Other elections, from that of Jefferson to that of Kennedy, were frequently subject to religious agitation, the issue appearing in approximately one election in every three in the nation's history, as the affiliation of the candidates or of their supporters has been publicly questioned.<sup>3</sup> As the

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<sup>1</sup>Humphrey J. Desmond, "American Protective Association," Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. I, pp. 426-428.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 426.

<sup>3</sup>Dulce and Richter, p. v.





Catholic minority grew in numbers--reaching 24,000,000 in 1928--the political aspirations of its constituents grew at least proportionately, and other religious animosities gave way to the problems presented by Catholic attack upon the "unwritten law." Though Catholics sought and gained admission to elective offices of increasing importance, neither major party had presented a candidate of that faith for the office of president or vice-president until Smith's challenge of the "unwritten law" in 1928.

In his speech of acceptance, he had referred to religion but once: "I will not be influenced in appointments by . . . what church he attends in the worship of God."<sup>1</sup> Not since his written reply to Charles Marshall in May, 1927, had he made a public defense of his Catholicism. The first compelling need to do so had come in August, 1928, when he was challenged by the Reverend John Roach Straton of New York's Calvary Baptist Church. But no agreement on the arrangements for the proposed debate was ever reached with Dr. Straton.

The question of religious loyalty vs. party loyalty raised grave doubts of Smith's ability to hold the staunchly Protestant South. It became increasingly apparent that Southern ministers were using their pulpits in opposition

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<sup>1</sup>Campaign Addresses of Governor Alfred E. Smith, Democratic Candidate for President, 1928. Issued by the Democratic National Committee, Washington, D. C. (New York: J. B. Lyon Co., 1929), pp. 25-26.

to his election. At the same time, the other social and moral issues were being widely agitated against him in other sections of the country, in ways that Smith felt were only cover for religious prejudice. Chief among these attacks was that by Prohibitionists against his "Wet" views. But there was also the claim that as a city man, he could not have received the wholesome moral formation afforded by rural America; that as the product of an Irish ghetto, he did not share the feelings and aspirations of the older native American stock; and that, as a protege of Manhattan's Tammany Hall, he was morally tainted by its corrupt practices.

As his campaign progressed, Smith came to realize more fully the importance of these issues to the electorate; and though still obviously reluctant, he decided to devote a major speech to the attacks upon him from this source. The occasion employed was that of a campaign rally at Oklahoma City's Stockyards Coliseum, September 20, 1928, in the early days of the swing through the West. He sought to meet the constellation of issues centering upon his religion through a recital of his record in public office and by exposure of the opposition's bigotry.

The importance of the speech lay in the inherent interest of the issue it discussed; in its being the only discussion of this issue during the campaign; in what it revealed of the candidate's own view of the issue through

the lines of thought selected for his defense; and in the bearing of the speech upon the campaign, the campaign upon the election, and the election upon subsequent American politics.

The present study is designed to seek answers to the following questions: Was Governor Smith accurate in his estimate of the religion issue? Why was Oklahoma City chosen as the site for this major address? What was the significance of the speech in the larger context of the issue of religion in American history? What was the relation of the religious controversy to other campaign issues? In view of the social disparities that had given rise to the issue, were the lines of thought selected by the candidate suitable to the immediate occasion and to the national circumstances? How did these lines of thought comport with the speaker's previous pronouncements on them? What were the social values forming the Governor's pre-conceptions, in what respects did these differ from the pre-conceptions of his hearers, to what extent did he recognize these disparities, and what were the means employed to adapt his materials to meet them? What was the response of his Coliseum audience and of the greater audience "outside"?

The study does not seek to evaluate Governor Smith's whole body of public speaking. Neither does it examine, except as they relate to the key speech, the seventeen major addresses of the 1928 campaign. A study in depth of one

speech forms the limits of the research. Political and historical considerations are reviewed only as background information necessary to the understanding of the place of religion in the campaign. Though audience response is examined, the number of election votes won or lost as a direct result of the speech is not an object of this research. The speaker's style and delivery are considered only as they displayed the disparity in backgrounds and social values between the speaker and his audience.

### Procedures

It is not enough to talk separately about the make-up of an audience at one point, about the main propositions of the speaker at another point, and about the speaker's use of traditional rhetorical techniques at still another point. The main function of history and criticism is to show how propositions and audiences are connected.<sup>1</sup>

Since hearers can evaluate a speaker's propositions only in the light of their own previously-acquired social values, the critic's understanding of those values is of utmost importance to his work. The differing values of the speaker and the degree of the speaker's understanding of those differences will also be essential knowledge. Since the unique means employed by the speaker to bridge the social gap forms the chief concern of this work, its scope

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<sup>1</sup>Albert J. Croft, "The Functions of Rhetorical Criticism," Quarterly Journal of Speech, Vol. XLII (Oct., 1956), p. 286.



has been restricted to a single speech. The speech selected provides an excellent setting for such a method of study.

1) The theme--the place of religion in American politics--was one worthy of his audience's attention and of the student's examination.

2) The present speech was the only occasion for personal confrontation of this audience by the speaker. He had not previously spoken in Oklahoma; he did not come again.

3) The issue, a peculiarly controversial one, was uniquely capable of exposing the widest divergence of opinion and practice between speaker and hearers.

4) The occasion provided the only major pronouncement on this topic during the campaign.

5) The audience was sufficiently homogeneous that some generalizations regarding its character may be drawn.

In order that the speaker's own lines of thought and their sequence may remain central to the study, the Oklahoma City speech text has been taken as the guide, and the order in which the speaker introduced his lines of thought has been adopted as the formal organization of this study.

Chapter II contains, in italics, the full text of the speech presented in brief segments, each of which is followed by the discussion relating to that unit. This comment includes one or more of the following considerations as they may be relevant to the case:



1) Investigation of the background of the speaker as a criterion for judgment of his effectiveness in the selection of inventional materials.

2) Verification of the truth of the speaker's assertions as measured by contemporary accounts, by the judgment of his biographers, and some historians of his period.

3) Comparison with previous pronouncements by the speaker on the topics introduced.

4) Discussion of elements in the background of his audience which might influence them toward acceptance or rejection of the propositions, with special attention to the differing social values between them and the speaker.

5) Notice of omission of relevant materials and a discussion of the possible reasons for such omission.

6) Audience response and speaker response to "feed-back."

The order of the study is not chronological, but partakes of the "flashback" technique of the cinema, historical and biographical materials being introduced at the point of need.

Chapter III consists of a summary of the speech and conclusions of the study. A bibliography and appendices complete the work.

The Appendices are as follows:

A) A textual comparison of the prepared manuscript of the speech with the verbatim report. These are arranged





in parallel columns with typographical devices designed to indicate common materials.

B) The "Open Letter to Governor Smith," by Charles C. Marshall, published in The Atlantic Monthly, April, 1927. This is the only high-level attack upon the Catholic candidacy to gain prominent notice.

C) Governor Smith's reply to Marshall, "Catholic and Patriot," which was published in The Atlantic Monthly, May, 1927.

D) A reproduction of the penciled notes of the Oklahoma City speech, written on six envelopes in the Governor's handwriting.

E) A reproduction of the letter from the Grand Dragon of the Realm of Arkansas, Ku Klux Klan, to a delegate to the Democratic Convention of 1928, referred to in the speech and quoted in part.

#### Materials and Sources

To describe the life and political career of Alfred E. Smith, the following biographies were consulted: Henry F. Pringle, Alfred E. Smith: A Critical Study, which proved to be discerning and most helpful; Oscar Handlin, Al Smith and His America, a partisan but full account; Frank Graham, Al Smith: American, also partisan and brief; Norman Hapgood and Henry Moscowitz, Up From the City Streets: Alfred E. Smith, a view from the inner circle; Emily Smith Warner, with Hawthorne Daniel, The Happy Warrior: Story of My Father,

an affectionate daughter's recollections; Robert Moses, A Tribute to Governor Smith, an accolade from an old colleague in memoriam; and the Smith autobiography, Up To Now, written immediately after the campaign and filled with helpful anecdote, though disappointing in its brief treatment of the religion issue.

Some of the histories which proved valuable for their view of American society in the 20's were: Sydney Fine, Recent America; William E. Leuchtenberg, The Perils of Prosperity; and Frederick Lewis Allen, Only Yesterday. Karl Schriftgiesser, This Was Normalcy: An Account of the Party Politics During Twelve Republican Years, 1920-1932 presented a helpful view of the party struggle.

The history of the State of Oklahoma was investigated through works which included: Victor E. Harlow, Oklahoma: Its Origins and Development; Edwin C. McReynolds, Oklahoma: A History of the Sooner State; and Grant Foreman, A History of Oklahoma.

The issues of the campaign were investigated with the aid of topical works. On the subject of church-state relations, some of the most helpful were: Alvin W. Johnson and Frank H. Yost, Separation of Church and State in the United States, an historically oriented investigation of the constitutional provisions; Richard J. Regan, American Pluralism and the Catholic Conscience, a Catholic discussion of the problem; Paul Blanshard, American Democracy and



Catholic Power, an expression of Protestant concern; Blanchard's, Communism, Democracy and Catholic Power; Currin V. Shields, Democracy and Catholicism in America; Jerome Gregory Kersin, Catholic Viewpoint on Church and State; Will Herberg, Protestant, Catholic, Jew, which explores the changing relationships among the group; Patricia Barrett, Religious Liberty and the American Presidency, a Catholic study into the more recent aspects of the problem; F. E. Mayer, The Religious Bodies of America; Charles Marshall, The Roman Catholic Church and the Modern State.

On the subject of Prohibition, the following works were valuable: Charles Merz, The Dry Decade, an essential work; Herbert Asbury, The Great Illusion; Henry W. Lee, How Dry We Were, which derides the Prohibition experiment; and Mabel Walker Willebrandt, Inside Prohibition, which reports the difficulties attendant upon its enforcement.

On the history of the Ku Klux Klan, the following were among the works consulted: John Moffatt Mecklin, The Ku Klux Klan: A Study of the American Mind, an excellent source; William Peirce Randel, The Ku Klux Klan, A Century of Infamy, a very recent survey of both the old and the new Klans; and Henry P. Fry, The Modern Ku Klux Klan, an expose by a former member.

Concerning the history of Tammany Hall, the following works were consulted: Gustavus Meyers, History of Tammany Hall, which gave its early origins; and M. R. Werner,



Tammany Hall, which throws light on the organization in Smith's day.

For a discussion of the political campaign, Edmund Moore's A Catholic Runs for President was very helpful. An unpublished Ph. D. dissertation by William David Smith, "Alfred E. Smith and John F. Kennedy: The Religious Issue During the Presidential Campaigns of 1928 and 1960," was valuable for its broad view of the issue in American politics; Herbert Hoover's Memoirs cast light upon Smith and the issue from his opponent's point of view. The place of the Prohibition issue and the churches in the campaign was seen in Ruth C. Silva, Rum, Religion and Votes: 1928 Re-examined.

Newspapers and periodicals were used in researching the Oklahoma City speech backgrounds and for commentary on the issues at the scene. These were found in the Oklahoma State Library and in the Oklahoma City Library. Local newspapers consulted included: The Daily Oklahoman, which was most complete and helpful; The Oklahoma News and the Oklahoma City Times. A Roman Catholic weekly, The Southwest Courier was consulted in its editorial offices. A monthly journal, Harlow's Weekly, was found in the City Library. The New York Times was helpful at all points. Other articles were studied in American Review of Reviews, America, Commonweal, Atlantic Monthly, Forum, Current History, Independent, Literary Digest, The Nation, The Fellowship Forum and others.

The text of the prepared manuscript of the Oklahoma City speech was found in mimeograph form as distributed to newsmen. The verbatim report of the speech was that of the New York Times, published in their edition of September 21, 1928.

Materials relating to Smith's early life in that city were obtained at the Museum of the City of New York, where Mr. A. K. Baragwanath, Senior Curator, was most helpful. A visit to the lower East Side provided insights into the "old neighborhood" where Smith grew up: the church where he was an altar boy, the parochial school where he studied, and the family home at 25 Oliver Street.

At the New York State Library in Albany, Miss Wolohan, in charge of research materials, made available the Smith Papers, in which are to be found the campaign speeches and the Smith collection of anti-Catholic literature.

For an understanding of the Smith voice and delivery the National Voice Library at Michigan State University provided records.

In Oklahoma City, interviews provided additional information regarding the Smith visit. Mr. William Martineau, as secretary of the Coliseum Corporation in 1928, was in charge of arrangements for the Smith speech in that building. Mr. Frank Martin, former mayor of Oklahoma City, and prominent Roman Catholic, gave helpful information on the Smith visit, the Ku Klux Klan in Oklahoma City, and the trials of the religious minority in the politics of that era.





Mr. William J. Holloway, lieutenant-governor in 1928, and governor the following year upon the impeachment of Governor Johnston, provided interesting recollections of those events.

#### Textual Considerations

Two very different texts of the Oklahoma City speech were found. A manuscript, prepared aboard the campaign train en route from Topeka to Oklahoma City and completed in the Huckins Hotel, was handed to reporters at 2:45 p.m. on the day of the speech, and appeared in the Oklahoma City papers the following day. A copy of this manuscript in mimeograph form was found among the Smith Papers.<sup>1</sup> It will be referred to hereafter as the prepared manuscript.

The New York Times stenographer made a verbatim record which his paper published in full the following day.<sup>2</sup> This version has been taken as the basic text for this study, and will be called the verbatim record.

Both texts are found in Appendix A, arranged in parallel columns and provided with typographical devices as an aid to comparative study.

Discussion of the preparation of one text and of the Governor's extemporaneous speaking method exhibited in the other, appears early in the body of the study.

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, "Campaign Address, Oklahoma City," Letter A, Section 1.

<sup>2</sup>The New York Times, September 21, 1928, p. 22. The Times office for information services attests to the reliability of its stenographic reporting in the campaign period.

## CHAPTER II

### LET'S LOOK AT THE RECORD

The Stockyards Coliseum stands on ground that in 1965, has not yet been annexed to Oklahoma City. In 1928 it was separated from the town by nearly two miles of open land west of the bridge over the north fork of the little Canadian River. The street railway that brought thousands to the Smith meeting has been removed; a freeway is under construction, and the stockyards have been surrounded but not quite subdued by the growing city. A sign over the stockyard entrance bids the visitor welcome. A less pretentious billboard, lettered in red and black, announces that wrestling matches may be seen in the Coliseum every Friday evening at 8:30. The building is yearly host to the Auto Show, the Horse Show and the circus. But most evenings it is dark, and the income is scarcely sufficient to keep the floors clean, never enough for the remodeling and major repair it sorely needs.

In the 1920's every event too large for the Masonic Hall and inappropriate to the churches convened perforce in the Coliseum--athletic performance, political rally, religious revival. It had survived the storm that blew away its

stage; the fire that razed the annex would come in 1929.<sup>1</sup> On a hot September evening in 1928 the Coliseum was to receive the most renowned guest of its career.

Governor Smith left Albany on September 16, starting a campaign tour that would take him as far west as Montana and south to Oklahoma. He would deliver seven major addresses and countless rear-platform greetings at the whistle-stops. The special train was composed of eleven cars, three of them reserved for the press.<sup>2</sup> There were a dozen movie men and photographers aboard, and a squad of stenographers who would take down everything the nominee said, even the informal remarks from the rear platform.

The train departed from Grand Central Station, New York City, at 6:15 p.m. on Sunday, picked up the Governor and his party in Albany and was off for the West at 11:30.<sup>3</sup> A weekend of rest had prepared the nominee for the rigors of the tour, for he slept poorly on trains and planned as little night travel as possible.<sup>4</sup> The New York Times headlined the departure in the style of the day:

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<sup>1</sup>Interview with William Martineau, former Secretary, Stockyards Coliseum, April 6, 1965.

<sup>2</sup>Daily Oklahoman, September 10, 1928, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup>New York Times, September 16, 1928, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup>Daily Oklahoman, September 10, 1928, p. 9.

SMITH STARTS TOUR TO WIN THE WEST;  
BIG CROWD CHEERS

\* \* \*

Wearing Brown Derby and With Wife on Arm  
He Thanks Host Filling Albany Station

\* \* \*

POLICE ARE SWEEPED ASIDE

\* \* \*

Host of Floral Pieces Were Sent to the Train  
As Evidence of Popular Affection

\* \* \*

"GOOD LUCK, AL," THE CRY<sup>1</sup>

He would need luck, for the tracks led through enemy territory. But this was Albany, and the cheering New Yorkers brought flowers that filled half a car. The Governor's wife was aboard, and their daughter, Mrs. John A. Warner. The party also included: William Kenny, a New York contractor and close friend of the Governor; Major General William H. Haskell, commandant of the New York National Guard; Charles Berry, New York City comptroller; Judges Bernard Shientag and Joseph Proskauer of New York City; and Mrs. Maroline O'Day, vice-chairman of the New York Democratic central committee.<sup>2</sup>

The candidate's car was equipped with three radios, for he must not lose contact with the world, particularly with Mr. Hoover. The Republican candidate was also off on

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, September 17, 1928, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Oklahoma News, September 20, 1928, p. 1.

the campaign trail, starting Tuesday at Newark, New Jersey, where he was met by the Thomas A. Edisons. Smith listened to the Newark speech on the radio.<sup>1</sup>

The schedule called for a one-hour stop in Chicago --a parade, not a speech. Omaha, Nebraska had been chosen for the first major pronouncement. Smith felt the importance of the Omaha speech because it was the first of the campaign and because, in farm country, it would deal with the farm problem. He was ready.

To prepare it I gave much careful thought and study, much as I would have done if I were to carry a bill in the legislature on a new subject. I read much of the literature available and especially the bills which had failed in Congress or by the President's veto.<sup>2</sup>

He was pleased with the speech; Nebraska Democrats were pleased with him. And good will passed beyond the borders of the state.

One Kansas Democratic leader, National Committeeman Dudley Doolittle, who rode the Smith train from Omaha to Topeka, declared it would bring so many farmers into the Democratic fold that it would throw Kansas into the "doubtful" class. Kansas is regarded in normal times as a rock-ribbed Republican state, though the Democrats carried it in 1912 and 1926.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., September 17, 1928, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Alfred E. Smith, Up To Now (New York: The Viking Press, 1929), p. 393.

<sup>3</sup>Oklahoma News, September 20, 1928, p. 16.

"Enemy territory" disclosed enthusiastic friends. Topeka, Kansas, home of Republican vice-presidential candidate Curtis, gave Smith a larger demonstration than that for Curtis at the homecoming after his nomination.

Early Thursday morning the Governor's train crossed from enemy territory into doubtful territory, the State of Oklahoma. Ten electoral votes were at stake. Since statehood these had been registered in the Democratic column in every national election save the Harding landslide.<sup>1</sup> But how doubtful was the issue in 1928 the state leaders knew only too well. They had demanded this visit. Smith declared to Oklahoma City reporters that he had nothing to do with selecting their city for a speech. "The national committee arranges that," he said.<sup>2</sup> The Governor's representative, Charles L. Hand, had told reporters a week before, "I would say that Oklahoma City was selected because it was deemed necessary for the Governor to speak here in order to doubly assure victory in the state, despite the fact it is normally Democratic."<sup>3</sup>

State leaders joined the campaign train near the state line. The train reached Oklahoma City at 10 a.m. and was met by a crowd of shouting partisans three blocks deep, filling windows and swarming to the tops of buses and lamp

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Daily Oklahoman, September w1, 1928, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup>Oklahoma News, September 14, 1928, p. 2.





posts. The New York Times, favorable to the candidate, reported wild enthusiasm.<sup>1</sup> Local observers thought they discovered an air of intense curiosity.

A motorcade brought the party through the residence area to a downtown hotel for the morning reception and an afternoon of politicking with local party men. In the lobby, bands struck up the "Sidewalks of New York." Governor Johnston came, promising the state in November, but others were not so sure. Much, they said, depended upon the evening speech.

The meeting was called to order at 8:20 with an audience estimated at 25,000 at the Coliseum in Packingtown. Governor Johnston presented the visitor amid cheers from inside and echoing shouts from the corridors. Al Smith entered from the left wing, waving the brown derby, and at stage center received the cheers of the crowd for four minutes. He began to speak, when order was restored, in the accents of New York. This was a Democrat, the candidate of their party, four-term governor of the nation's most populous state, the son of immigrants, a product of urban slums, a graduate of Tammany Hall, a Roman Catholic, and a "Wet." Much would depend, in Oklahoma, upon the speech he was about to deliver. And for all the world to see, the New York Times published it next day in full:

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, September 21, 1928, p. 1.

OKLAHOMA CITY, Okla.--The verbatim speech of Governor Smith tonight was as follows:

*Honored Governor, Mr. Chairman and Fellow Citizens of Oklahoma and adjoining States. (A voice: "Good".)*

*It would be an awful thing if somebody asked me to name them. (Laughter.) I had all the names this afternoon but it is difficult to remember. However, I am very grateful to you, Governor, and to our former, Governor, for your very kind words of welcome.<sup>1</sup>*

The words were kind indeed, and they had been accompanied by all the usual courtesies. But in spite of polite preliminaries both the platform and the audience gave evidence that all was not well in the Oklahoma Democracy. Only a few days before the event, leaders were still split over the evening's procedures.

With the advance guard of visitors giving evidence that the predictions of Democartian leaders on the ground would come true and workers at the headquarters frantically trying to complete details, politics typical of the Democratic situation in the state was seen when George D. Key, state chairman, and Scott Ferriss, national committeeman, refused to announce the name of the speaker who would introduce Governor Smith at the Coliseum.

It appeared certain that Governor Johnston will not introduce Smith, because of the opposition to Johnston and the bitter state political feuds.

It was reported, however, that to ease the situation, the leaders have agreed to have Governor Johnston deliver a speech of welcome, while Lee Cruce, former governor, makes the speech of introduction.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>2</sup>Oklahoma News, September 20, 1928, p. 1.

In the end, the intricate needs of politics were served by recourse to the following strategem: Chairman Key of the State Democratic Committee spoke first. He introduced C. N. Haskell, first governor of Oklahoma. Haskell introduced Mrs. D. A. McDougal, national committee-woman. She introduced Mrs. Kelly Brown, vice-chairman of the state committee, who presented Lee Cruce, former governor. At the close of his speech, he introduced Governor Henry Johnston, who presented "the next President of the United States."<sup>1</sup>

Governor Henry C. Johnston embodied much of Oklahoma's brief history. He had been vice-president of the Constitutional Convention and chairman of the Democratic caucus. He was president pro tempore of the first state legislature.<sup>2</sup> He was a true Oklahoman who in many respects may be viewed as typical of the Oklahoman of his time.

The Governor was a Democrat, born in Indiana.<sup>3</sup> When he was a young man, it could be said that all white residents of Oklahoma Territory had been born outside its borders. A majority of these settlers were Democrats, and the State had always maintained a Democratic majority.<sup>3</sup> The settlement of the territory was unique in American

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., September 12, 1928, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Edwin C. McReynolds, Oklahoma: A History of the Sooner State (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1954), p. 352.

<sup>3</sup>Victor E. Harlow, Oklahoma: Its Origins and Development (Oklahoma City: Harlow Publishing Corporation, 1955), p. 379.

history, one hundred thousand rushing across its borders in one day. Upon authorization by Congress and the Department of the Interior, President Harrison had declared the territory open for white settlement on April 22, 1889.<sup>1</sup> Troops were assigned to the borders to prevent eager homesteaders from entering before the prescribed hour, and to keep the peace. Trains waited at the frontier until high noon when the sound of army trumpets released the pent-up horde, and Oklahoma's two million new acres were claimed before dark.<sup>2</sup>

The southern and eastern areas were largely settled by Southerners--Democrats. In the north the political allegiance might be mixed, but the state as a whole possessed a Democratic majority from the beginning. Every governor of Oklahoma from Statehood to the 1960's has been a Democrat. Johnston's election in 1926 was part of a Democratic sweep, including the entire state administrative ticket and a great majority in the state legislature. Elmer Thomas, Democrat, was chosen for the United States Senate.

Governor Smith would find Democrats in Oklahoma, but he would find them a house divided, torn both by the ambitions of their own leaders and by the nation-wide issues which Smith embodied. A powerful faction remained aloof from the national campaign. An even more militant group

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 256.

<sup>2</sup>Oklahoma News, September 12, 1928, p. 1.



openly supported Hoover. No state campaign headquarters was opened in the capital until the week of Smith's visit.

Of the local problems, Carl Magee wrote on the day after the Smith speech:

Oklahoma Democracy is split beyond the possibility of any sort of reasonable party solidarity this year. On the Smith question the "moral forces" of the party in Oklahoma are in open and militant revolt. . . . Oklahoma Democracy is split down the middle over Al Smith.

Then the party is split crosswise over the question of the state administration. Only in spots does the seam of this split coincide with that of the Smith breach. Anti-administration Democrats are supporting Republicans in preference to pro-administration Democrats, and the administration forces are almost openly seeking the defeat of anti-administration Democrats, even by Republicans.<sup>1</sup>

Such broken fences Smith would try to mend in the course of a twenty-four hour visit, and with a speech on the most divisive topic of the day. Such was the complexity of the Oklahoma political quarrel that when the State was lost by 175,000 votes in November, none could say with certainty whether Smith was the cause of defeat or its victim.

Governor Johnson was a Protestant. The pioneer stock of the state was virtually all Protestant. Its settlers came from the rural South and Midwest, where Catholics were virtually unknown. In 1928 it was estimated that the Roman Catholic population was no more than two percent of

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<sup>1</sup>Carl Magee, "Turning On the Light," Oklahoma News, September 22, 1928.

the whole. These were Irish or German and had come from the larger midwestern cities to settle in the larger Oklahoma centers. They were not readily assimilated and they thought their lot to be hard. In early statehood years, only one Catholic, William Doyle, had surmounted the religious barrier to reach high office--state senator and judge.<sup>1</sup>

Governor Johnston was a Dry. Oklahoma was a dry state long before the Eighteenth Amendment. Several acts of Congress had guaranteed that liquor would not enter Indian country, and Indian leaders were opposed to any change in this rule. When the Statehood Enabling Act was under consideration at Washington, Chief Pleasant Porter of the Creeks spoke movingly of the nation's responsibility to maintain prohibition for the Indians. William H. Murray has given this report of the speech.

Gentlemen, you are going to pass a bill making the Indian Territory part of a new state. For this action I do not blame you. Perhaps it is best for us, the price of our own progress. But before you pass this bill I want to remind you of some facts.

When the Five Civilized Tribes were forced to move from their homes east of the Mississippi two solemn pledges were given by the Great White Father. First, we were to be free; no government would ever be set up over us without our consent. Second, the Federal Government would help us to prevent forever the sale or use of intoxicating liquors in our nations. Believing in the integrity of our white brothers, we consented to a great migration westward. The bones of over sixteen thousand of our people lie along that gruesome trail through swamps, deep woods and prairies. These died from hardships, who in their old homes might have lived many

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<sup>1</sup>Interview with Mr. and Mrs. Frank J. Martin, Oklahoma City, April 6, 1965.

happy years. Homesickness and despair wrung our hearts, but we believed in the pledge of our Great White Father, and we kept our pledge to him.

Now with that experience graven deeply in our hearts and the hearts of our children, we feel that we must remind the Government of its obligations to us. If a new state is to be, if we are to be required to sacrifice our tribal governments, the White Father must remember our sixteen thousand dead and our travail, and his promises to us.

One of those promises you are now about to break; you cannot avoid it. We are asked to give up our right to govern ourselves. We submit.

But we do not submit to the breaking of the other promise, to a change that would fill our country with saloons, that would poison the bodies of our people and demoralize their souls with the white man's liquor.

The United States Government, as it gives us statehood, must also give us a guarantee that this thing shall not happen to us.

Will you do it? I believe you will.<sup>1</sup>

They did. The Enabling Act provided prohibition for a period of twenty-one years. In 1908, a bill to create a state agency for the distribution of liquor was defeated under the referendum; prohibition had won the day and was vigorously enforced.<sup>2</sup> The strong element of Fundamentalist Protestantism needed no more than this favorable beginning to press for statewide prohibition on a permanent basis. In 1916 Oklahoma anticipated the Eighteenth Amendment by the passage of the Ferguson Bone Dry Law, which stood until 1933.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cited in Harlow, p. 322.

<sup>2</sup>Grant Foreman, A History of Oklahoma (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1942), p. 318.

<sup>3</sup>Harlow, p. 350.





The Governor, heading a hand-picked Dry delegation to the Democratic Convention at Houston, 1928, was faced with the dilemma that would confront the voters of the state in November--whether to go along with the Smith nomination or stand by Dry principle.<sup>1</sup> The Oklahoma delegation chose party loyalty. Back home, Oklahomans chose otherwise, and Johnston and his friends were caught in the middle.

Governor Johnston was a Mason and a Klansman. In Oklahoma in the Twenties, these two organizations were by no means identical, but had broadly overlapping memberships.<sup>2</sup> Johnston's record in the Oklahoma Masonic Lodge was excellent; He became Grand Master and the wide acquaintances made in lodge work were a strong factor in his political success.<sup>3</sup>

While the heyday of the Oklahoma Klan was 1921 to 1923, in 1928 its leadership was still active; and it was a force in state politics.<sup>4</sup> It threw its influence to Johnston. At least one factor in his 1929 impeachment and removal from office was the fading of Klan influence.

Dr. Litton summarizes the Klan's role:

The leadership of the Klan in Oklahoma was made up of men in high places in the State--men who were faculty members and administrative officers in the State's colleges, ministers, members of the professions, and

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<sup>1</sup>McReynolds, p. 355.

<sup>2</sup>Interview with John Holloway, former governor of Oklahoma, Oklahoma City, April 7, 1965.

<sup>3</sup>McReynolds, p. 352.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

businessmen who rationalized their affiliation as a bulwark against immorality and sedition . . . .

The Klan with its mysteries and ceremonious titles had much of the appeal of a lodge. It must not be assumed that the Masonic lodges and Protestant churches became adjuncts of the Klan organization. Their memberships were overlapping, perhaps, and many persons no doubt became confused in their allegiance.

Fortunately for Oklahoma, the Klan virus reached its crucial state of infection about 1923 or 1924, and thereafter began its gradual decline.<sup>1</sup>

Governor Smith faced Governor Johnston and thousands of like-minded Democrats with full knowledge of these facts. It was not a wholly hostile audience, for they were Democrats and he was their candidate. But they were split--split over the personalities that led them. But splits could be mended. It was worse to be baffled by issues almost invisible that went deep into their past; issues that had made them what they were: their way of life, their churches, their Anglo-Saxon heritage. Could this man who stood before them clear away such doubts? Could he even be a Democrat, who was so different from Oklahoma Democrats? Tonight they would judge.

At least, those who came would judge. Thousands had stayed away: the bigoted and the bluenosed in company with the fearful and the honest doubters. The anticipated crowds did not materialize; the Coliseum failed to fill. It was the largest building he ever spoke in, the candidate said in

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<sup>1</sup>Gaston Litton, History of Oklahoma at the Golden Anniversary of Statehood, Vol. I (New York: Lewis Historical Pub. Co., 1957), p. 555.

his autobiography,<sup>1</sup> but the only difficulty foreseen by party workers had been where to put the crowds.

A rush for tickets for seats in the Coliseum to hear Gov. Al Smith next Thursday is expected with the announcement that the New York governor probably will make the outstanding speech of his western tour here, according to Scott Ferris, Democratic national committeeman.

Ferris said tickets would be apportioned among the seventy-seven counties and every effort would be made to take care of all of the visitors who come here to hear Smith.

County Democratic chairmen have been requested to notify the headquarters of the number of Democrats from their respective counties who will attend. A meeting will be held at the headquarters Sunday to apportion tickets, although the plan has not been completed, Ferris said.<sup>2</sup>

The next day there was anticipation of a fine crowd:

It is evident that a multitude will be on hand to see the presidential nominee, to witness the parade, to meet him and to hear him speak at the Coliseum. The hurry and confusion at Democratic state and national headquarters this week, with demands for tickets for the speech proved that.<sup>3</sup>

The following day, Monday, a plan was improvised with the hope of satisfying all groups. Out-county delegations were to be favored:

Tickets to hear Al Smith at the Coliseum Thursday night at 7:30 o'clock will be apportioned to the various counties of the state based on the reservations already filed by the Democratic county chairman of each county, it was decided at a meeting of the state Democratic campaign committee Sunday.

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, Up To Now, p. 396.

<sup>2</sup>Daily Oklahoman, September 15, 1928, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., September 16, p. 1.

Distribution of the tickets will be made after the parade at Democratic headquarters. Tickets will be issued to the county chairman of each county. In the event a chairman fails to apply for his county's apportionment of tickets before 2 o'clock in the afternoon, the tickets will be issued to "some recognized representative" of that county.<sup>1</sup>

By Tuesday the rush for tickets had produced a major problem:

About 20,000 unreserved seats will be open to the public when Governor Smith speaks at the Coliseum Thursday, Scott Ferris, Democratic national committeeman, announced Tuesday.

Only about 35,000 seats will be available. Ten thousand of these are to be reserved for delegations from outside the city. At least 70,000 persons are expected.

Requests for reservations have swamped headquarters and previous announcement that all seats would be held for ticket-holders only complicated the problem.<sup>2</sup>

On the day of the speech the Daily Oklahoman carried a bold box on page one announcing:

To accommodate the overflow from the Coliseum, Thursday night, and for those who will be unable to get to the Coliseum, loud speakers carrying Gov. Al Smith's speech will be available to the public. The Oklahoman Park, with plenty of grass to sit on, will be convenient to many. The speech will be reproduced over the public address system. Loud speakers also will be available in the auditorium at the Public Market on Exchange Avenue. WKY and the National Broadcast Company chain will broadcast the speech.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., September 17, 1928, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., September 18, 1928, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., September 20, 1928, p. 1.

But the people came in no such numbers. True, the Coliseum itself was full, but it seats only about 15,000. The great Annex, for this occasion opened to the stage by the removal of a partition, was nearly empty. Smith had promised to go into the Annex for a brief message at the close of the meeting so that the thousands there could see the man to whom they had been listening by loudspeaker. But he did not go; there were not enough there to merit it.<sup>1</sup>

Where was the anticipated crowd? Three thousand were in Oklahoman Park, where radio brought the message. Did radio account for all the absentees? It was playing an important role in a national campaign for the first time. The Daily Oklahoman had carried a full-page ad:

Hear Al Smith with a Majestic  
Thursday, September Twentieth  
8 p.m.

Over W. K. Y.

It is expected that Al Smith, governor of New York and Democratic nominee for President, will make one of the most sensational speeches of the campaign when he visits Oklahoma City. To hear every word, every modulation of voice, you need a Majestic Radio--You can not buy a better Radio at any price.

(Price: \$167.50 or 137.50 in a Smaller Cabinet)<sup>2</sup>

Those who stayed home at the radio may well have been those Smith needed most to meet face to face. The Reverend Eric Montizambert, Pastor of St. John's Episcopal

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<sup>1</sup>Interview with Mr. William Martineau, April 6, 1965.

<sup>2</sup>Daily Oklahoman, September 17, 1928, p. 13.

Church, thought so. He was asked to comment next day for the News:

It was the most orderly big crowd that I have ever seen at a political meeting. But it didn't impress me--a complete outsider with no partisan prejudices--as the right crowd for the occasion. Too many politicians with minds made up--delegates, delegates, and more delegates who "need no conversion".

Too many sagging jewels and lardy paunches that belong to yesterday. Not enough lean youths and scraggy girls whose votes will be a deciding factor in the outcome of this campaign.<sup>1</sup>

Pastor Montizambert thought it an orderly crowd.

Oklahoman reporter Otis Sullivant saw "fighting for seats."

"Many were lost in the shuffle" and never found their reserved seats. He thought it a typical Democratic Party gathering, with those who arrived on time grabbing any seat they could, while police and National Guardsmen strove to keep things in order.<sup>2</sup> A band in the rear did "The Sidewalks of New York," and was answered by another in the pit playing "Dixie."

The Pastor thought that, of the seven introductions, the one by ex-Governor Lee Cruce was best:

He didn't say much, but he said it well until the inexorable chairman compelled him to give way to a reverend gentleman, who, in what was described as an "invocation", occupied at least seven minutes in telling the Almighty that of course he must be a Democrat since the devil is most assuredly a Republican!

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<sup>1</sup>Oklahoma News, September 21, 1928, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Daily Oklahoman, September 21, 1928, p. 1.

But perhaps that was good practical politics. Perhaps the planners of the program were subtle enough to realize that, if they made us submit to boredom for a time, we should be carried off our feet by the brilliant contrasting personality of Alfred Smith.<sup>1</sup>

Anyway that is precisely what they did.<sup>1</sup>

In the end they seem to have remembered that they were hospitable Southerners, whose duty was to make Governor Smith feel at home, and with certain mental reservations, they proceeded to do so.

*I am sure I am more than grateful to the people of Oklahoma and the adjoining States that gave me the wonderful welcome that was not only enjoyed by myself but all the members of our party when they arrived at the depot, and continued, it seemed to me, throughout the day.*

The Oklahoma City Times estimated the crowds in the street at 75,000:

A genuine New York atmosphere was given to the immense demonstration accorded the Democratic presidential nominee when early in the parade there fluttered earthward from the taller buildings a shower of confetti, manufactured of torn-up newspapers, telephone directories and last month's magazines.

From every street intersection there poured into the main arteries of Oklahoma City a veritable flood of people, gaily dressed women and girls and more somberly clad men and boys, all uniting in cheer after cheer for Smith.

He stood in the foremost automobile, his face somewhat sunburned and shining, his famous million-dollar smile breaking at short intervals, while his noted brown derby waved above his head.

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<sup>1</sup>Oklahoma News, September 21, 1928, p. 1.



As the parade turned east into Grand Avenue he pulled a long black stogie from his pocket and crammed it into his mouth pulling deep breaths of blue smoke between spoken greetings to the throng.<sup>1</sup>

But even the parade was not so large as had been planned. Carl Magee, in his column, "Turning On the Light," thought that he could identify certain missing marchers:

Most men who are candidates for state and county office on the Democratic ticket stayed out of the parade. The News would be glad to publish a list of such candidates as will rush forward to announce that they marched in the parade. The list will not occupy much space. Candidates ducked such open commitment. Those who hope to be candidates in the future also ducked. That was why the parade was small but the Coliseum crowd large. The significance of this is interesting. It is an admission of Smith's weakness in Oklahoma. Politicians did not wish to tie their futures up with those of Al Smith.<sup>2</sup>

The parade ended at noon, but there was little rest for Smith. State politicians continued to mill about the lobby of the Huckins hotel in an effort to see Smith. He was in his room finishing the evening's speech. The conference with House and Senate leaders, scheduled for one o'clock, was delayed until three. Meanwhile a luncheon in honor of Mrs. Smith and the other ladies of the campaign party drew 500 Democratic women.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Oklahoma City Times, September 20, 1928, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Oklahoma News, September 21, 1928, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., September 20, 1928, p. 1.

Local people had homes to which they could repair, but the crowd from the counties found little to do but to loiter under the Governor's suite, hoping for an appearance at the windows, while a band in the lobby rehearsed for the evening meeting.

And there was some apparent hostility, which the Governor did not fail to note:

A tall, square-jawed man apparently of the Indian type was chosen as a personal bodyguard. His extreme reticence caused me to question him. I asked him if he did not expect some trouble at the hall that night and he replied, "The Democratic Committee has appointed sergeants at arms for the speedy removal of anybody who attempts any disorder or interrupts or interferes with the speaker."

It indicates how tense was the feeling in New York and how strong was the apprehension of possible danger to me that immediately upon my arrival at the hotel after the speech, I called Mrs. Moskowitz on the telephone, and she said: "Where are you? "Back at the hotel," I replied. "Thank God for that," she answered.<sup>1</sup>

Inside the Coliseum, however, the speaker was among friends. This was a partisan audience, screened by the distribution of tickets through Party leaders of the towns and counties. Among those present were many who held mental reservations regarding the speaker, but the actively hostile had not gained entrance in numbers sufficient to make trouble, for the press accounts report not the slightest disturbance. The initial greeting had been well received, and the speaker was assured of a hearing.

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, Up To Now, p. 397.



The Governor, speaking extemporaneously, had come thus far without reference either to the manuscript or to his penciled notes. The introduction had consisted of greetings to the chairman, the guests of honor, and the audience, and an expression of thanks for hospitality received. That the planned context of the speech now begins is evident from a comparison of the verbatim report at this point with the prepared manuscript's first sentences, and with the first of the penciled notes.

Further comparison of texts and notes reveals the extemporaneous fluency of the speaker. The style of the prepared manuscript, however, was somewhat more formal than that of the verbatim record, its syntax was more regular, its grammar more nearly correct, and it was free of materials extraneous to the announced topic.

The verbatim record is slightly longer than the manuscript, much additional material appearing in it at points in which the speaker held clippings and exhibits in his hands. He seemed impelled to comment on them more fully than he had done in the prepared copy, and after illustrations and quotations he often added specific instances which did not form a part of the script.

On the other hand, during the last third of the speech, apparently aware that his digressions had taken time and conscious of radio's demands for punctuality, he sought to catch up by omitting much, summarily reducing whole paragraphs to a sentence or two.



The vocabulary of the spoken text is more forceful than the written text, employing strong language in the heat of delivery which he had hesitated to commit to print.

The copy for advance distribution was prepared on the campaign train and in the Huckins Hotel at Oklahoma City. A delegation of State Senators was kept waiting while it received the last careful attentions.

The Governor's method of speech preparation has been described by Hapgood and Moscovitz:

First he prepared in his own mind his outline. He makes sure that all desired material is available. If it happens to be a situation in which it is necessary to give advance copies to the newspapers, he dictates his principal themes in advance.<sup>1</sup>

But at the time of delivery he rarely read from this copy, with the result that of nearly every major address two widely varying versions may be found. That he usually took the manuscript copy of the speech onto the platform there is evidence from the testimony of observers, but not from a comparison of the prepared text with the stenographic record. Though the lines of thought were identical and the sequence of ideas, illustrations, and quotations was parallel, the choice of words varied widely. On the platform he had brief penciled notes. The method was unique and was uniformly followed.

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<sup>1</sup>Norman Hapgood and Henry Moscovitz, Up From the City Streets: Alfred E. Smith (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1927), p. 153.

His custom of "looking at the record" required the use of clippings, quotes, and exhibits. To manage these on the platform, to keep them in order and to preserve them for later use, he employed as many as a dozen envelopes for a single speech. These were of legal size--4¼ by 9½ inches--white, and the writing was with a soft-lead pencil. The writing was done only on the back--length-wise--and the envelopes were numbered in sequence. In each envelope was placed the clipping or quotation required.<sup>1</sup>

Since these envelopes served as a filing system, many of them and their contents have been preserved.<sup>2</sup> In a few cases the notes are typewritten, but Smith preferred penciled notes because he could at the moment of delivery, more clearly remember his thoughts and feelings at the time of writing.<sup>3</sup> His daughter says that "his speeches were never outlined in any other way, and the penciled headings on the envelopes were often hardly understandable to anyone but himself."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Emily Smith Warner with Hawthorne Daniel, The Happy Warrior (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1956), p. 91.

<sup>2</sup>Smith Papers. (in the titles of the New York State Library, Albany, N. Y.)

<sup>3</sup>Smith, Up To Now, p. 388.

<sup>4</sup>Warner and Daniel, p. 91.





The "hardly understandable" notes of the Oklahoma City speech were written on six envelopes, numbered in the upper left hand corner.<sup>1</sup> Other numbers appearing in the body of the notes are a key to the similarly numbered exhibits found in the envelopes, which were to be drawn out in their order, waved before the audience in Smith's dramatic fashion, and returned to the envelope after use.

The Oklahoma City notes consist of about one hundred brief phrases:

- ① System of party Govt  
                     evil consequences in change  
 to Survive  
                     Campaign must be made on issues  
 2 Major issues Platform  
                     ability of candidates  
 distract the attention of electorate  
                     fasten it on un-American propaganda  
 discuss and denounce  
                     whispers  
 former Senator from your own state  
 challenge truth & sincerity  
 Cover treason to fundamentals of  
                     Jeffersonian Dem & Am. liberty  
 Raised issue of Record  
 I know what lies behind pretense  
                     seized upon by enemies of Dem. Party  
 Record--Proud of Record open sunlight 25 yrs.
- ② Career: 1903 to 1928  
           Born in dist  
 longest tenure of any Gov in history  
 Record of accomplishment  
                     Nat Convention  
 to lay before you record  
           Re Org of Govt  
           Ex Budget  
           Welfare leg.  
 Child "  
           Workmans Comp  
                     & factory code

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<sup>1</sup>A reproduction of the penciled notes is included in this study as Appendix D.

## Education

Graves  
figures louder than words

1919 = 11½ million

1928 = 86 "

74½ more

Pub Health

Bond issues (Rep neglect)

Parks future

③

Water Power

Ballot reform & direct primaries

corrupt practice

State Bonus soldiers

Agriculture

Cooperative marketing

good roads

State subsidy to town

Business handling of Govt affairs

Appts on merit basis

Reduction in taxation

Public Impts.

in spite of Rep legislation

Issues to people

appts confirm by Senate

Vetoos

No flaw or scandal in administration

60 million

Mills Rep Compt 1926

Rep Nat Committee would find

④

Challenge Owen

hard work & conscientious effort

forget it if I was Pres

great honor

NY Rep state

What people in NY say

Hughes #1

etc #2

Cry of Tammany is red herring

What lies behind "Religion"

necessity forced on me by Sen Owen

owe it to the party & the people

attempt bigotry hatred intolerance

un-American sect division

Where does propaganda come from

Rep Pub. Bureau woman

fel. forum

- ⑤ Division on Religious lines  
     Dec of Ind  
         Constitution  
     Grand Dragon #3  
     Make allowance for misguided  
         people but  
     One lie appts to office  
     facts  
         Cabinet ④ Page 5  
         Dept heads " 9  
         Other officials 12  
         Judicial & Co App last page

Children in Public Schools

#5

Ashland Ave Baptist #6

Syracuse slander

just a few Roosevelt & Cleveland

- ⑥ Expedient politically to  
     remain silent

Rep responsibility

Mrs. Willebrandt #7  
     Who is she Dep Atty Genl  
     What about Catholics  
         (state official)

Meanest thing #8  
     Vote for me or against me  
     Jefferson--Relig. freedom  
         cons. guarantee  
     Decide on real issues  
         farm Relief  
         Water power  
         flood Control  
         Re org of Govt  
         strong platform & record  
         no fear of result<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

In general, one envelope served for one main speech head, but this was subject to limitations of size. "Of course this method of speaking requires a considerable amount of practice," said Smith, "and I had it for twelve long years in the assembly, afterwards in the constitutional convention and during all of my campaigns."<sup>1</sup> By then it was the only method he could use. "I was never able to deliver a set speech; never able to write it, and never able to read it."<sup>2</sup>

Smith traces the evolution of the envelope system from a home-made scrapbook begun in childhood in a Wells-Fargo Express Company receipt book.<sup>3</sup> In it were pasted programs, clippings, and speeches. When the receipt book was full, he continued the file by the use of envelopes. When these materials were later drawn upon for speech making, the backs of the envelopes served for making notes. "It was this habit, acquired years ago," he says, "that led me to the use of envelopes in preparing topic headings for speeches."<sup>4</sup>

Smith's extemporaneous fluency was proverbial, and, with the passing years, increasingly effective. His manner of speaking was highly individual. It was never "poetical"

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, Up To Now, p. 387.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 386.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 388.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 389.

in any generally accepted sense. He was possessed rather of a sense of order; he was thoroughly prepared, and he was fluent in an informal fashion. His daughter says:

He was fluent and, in his own way, often eloquent. Neither his fluency nor his eloquence, however, were the result of form or polish. They were the result, instead, of his sincerity and deep conviction. The informality of his approach always left him free to take advantage of unexpected developments--even of interruptions--and I never saw him leave any platform without having made the points he had had in mind when he began to speak.<sup>1</sup>

Pringle describes him as majority leader of the State Assembly:

He was thirty-eight years old and was developing a gift for neat phrasing that deserted him only in times of great emotion and was a constant refutation of his lack of education. Almost always, speaking in public, he used grammatical English, although he did not know, probably, how it was that he did so. He had an innate sense of the right word.<sup>2</sup>

Such use of the spoken word might appear to an observer to be an inborn skill, but Smith was aware of the early influences which had given to his speech its accuracy and effectiveness. His elementary education was in the parochial school, and while it was all the formal training he ever had, it emphasized speaking. The program marking the closing exercises of St. James School, June 25, 1886, lists in its "Part Second" a reading entitled, "Miseries of

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<sup>1</sup>Warner and Daniel, p. 91.

<sup>2</sup>Henry F. Pringle, Alfred E. Smith: A Critical Study (New York: Macy-Masius, 1927), p. 159.

Traveling" by Alfred Smith.<sup>1</sup> There is on display at the Museum of the City of New York a medal awarded to him by his school when he was only ten. This triumph was won for a piece entitled, "The Death of Robespierre."<sup>2</sup>

An unusually fine memory, so important to the extemporaneous speaker, was developed in amateur theatricals. The parish of St. James had many clubs. The St. James' Dramatic Society enrolled the neighborhood Catholic youth for the production of two plays per year. It was freely conceded, says Smith, that St. James' was the best of the Catholic dramatic clubs in the city. Smith was ready for the club before the club was ready for him:

I was interested in amateur theatricals before I was old enough to play before a grown-up audience, and to give vent to my desire to produce plays the garret of the South Street house was often turned into a miniature theater. With the boys of the neighborhood for a cast and my sister and her girl friends to act the feminine parts, many a reproduction of current drama and many a home-made play were enacted there.<sup>3</sup>

Once a member of the club, he took part in all the plays produced, and was still making an occasional appearance on the boards as late as 1916 when we was Sheriff of New York County. He gives these plays an important place in autobiography, listing titles and roles. Among the three

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<sup>1</sup>In the files of the Museum of the City of New York.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Smith, Up To Now, p. 41.

such programs to be found at the Museum of the City of New York, two show Alfred E. Smith in the starring role, and in the third his name appears in the second place.<sup>1</sup> They are: "The Mighty Dollar," "Incog," and "The Paper Chase." At least in later life, Smith saw in these plays an aid in the preparation of the speaker:

For innocent pastime, for recreation, for knowledge, for training the memory, and for giving a person a certain degree of confidence, there is no better amusement than amateur theatricals.<sup>2</sup>

There is little doubt that the memorization of these models served to correct his early faults of grammar. Though he could quote no rules, in mature years his lack of high school education was rarely betrayed by his speech.

And he learned speaking from speakers. Before the days of radio, an orator on New York's East side could command an audience by simply standing up. Campaigns were carried on out of doors, and speakers stood on trucks or on temporary platforms. The procession was an important feature, with men carrying torches and wearing oil cloth capes to protect their clothes from the drip.

But marches must be climaxed by speeches, and capable campaign orators were heroes to young Smith. He names four who impressed his young mind: William Jennings Bryan spoke

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<sup>1</sup>Museum of the City of New York.

<sup>2</sup>Smith, Up To Now, p. 212.

in Tammany Hall and in the streets around Fourteenth and Irving Place. In the old Wells-Fargo scrapbook is preserved a copy of his "Cross of Gold."<sup>1</sup> Smith was impressed by the Great Commoner, but in maturity he recalled that Bryan had been talking over the people's heads. "I would be willing to venture the suggestion that not one in ten thousand voters in New York understood what he meant by the coinage of silver at the rate of sixteen to one," he said.<sup>2</sup> On the local scene there were others to admire and to imitate: Bourke Cockran, Elihu Root, and the State Senator, Thomas F. Grady. He always considered Grady to be the greatest he ever heard. He was a temperance lecturer and a debater. He had humor. He was a diligent student, understood government, and had a wonderful memory. The description of Grady by Smith could indeed be a description of the mature Smith. The two became intimate friends, and Smith credits Grady with teaching the science of practical government as well as the art of campaign oratory.<sup>3</sup>

But the greatest single observable element in his growth as an extemporaneous speaker was simply an abundance of practice, principally that in the State Assembly. Though he had little to say in his early years there, by 1906 he was speaking to nearly every point under discussion. Because

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<sup>1</sup>Museum of the City of New York.

<sup>2</sup>Smith, Up To Now, p. 212.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 52.



there was no time for the preparation of a set speech, he never used a manuscript. In eleven years of such rigorous apprenticeship, Smith learned to exploit memory and experience to produce an astonishing extemporaneous fluency.

"None of my inaugural speeches was ever prepared," he says, "I delivered them extemporaneously."<sup>1</sup> Yet they read smoothly, logically, and are possessed of a style equal to that of his written works. At Elmira, New York, during the 1928 campaign, he was confronted with an open letter printed in the newspaper. With no time to prepare further, he took the paper into the opera house and onto the stage. "Holding it up to the audience," he says, "I answered Senator Lowman's questions in detail."<sup>2</sup> A study of the Elmira speech shows it to be not inferior in invention, arrangement, or style to those of the same tour for which he had had the opportunity of specific preparation. The initial Speech of Acceptance was the only one of the 1928 campaign that was read from manuscript.

Had he read from the manuscript at Oklahoma City at this point, his opening words would have been: "Our country has achieved its great growth and become a model for the nations of the world under a system of party government. It would be difficult to predict what might be the evil

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 238.

consequences if that system were changed. If it is to survive, campaigns for the presidency must be fought out on issues really affecting the welfare and well-being and future growth of the country." His penciled notes reminded him to begin: "System of party Govt . . . evil consequences in change . . . to survive,"<sup>1</sup> With practiced eloquence, he looked up from the notes and the script and said:

*Our country during all its national life has been successful, has grown in power and influence and has been a model for Governments all over the world under what we have been pleased to call the party system. To survive, the party system must continue to be successful. To be successful, campaigns must be fought upon issues that have to do with the welfare, the progress and the prosperity of the country. (Applause)*

*In every national campaign there are practically two major considerations: first, the party platform; second, the ability of the candidate to make that platform effective. (Applause)*

As between platform and candidate, the major emphasis in 1928 was upon the candidate. This would not have displeased Governor Smith if the discussion had remained one of candidate "effectiveness." He felt that it had not, while elements of the opposition were ready to insist that in discussing his race and religion, his city origin, his Tammany connections, his views on Prohibition, and his votes on moral issues, they were indeed discussing his effectiveness,

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<sup>1</sup>Appendix D.

for they saw the office of president as one of social and moral leadership of the nation. The president's social and moral values, therefore, must be in conformity with those of the majority of citizens.

Smith, on the other hand, deplored such discussion, contending that his national origin, his tastes, his choice of friends, amusements, and dress, where he lived, what he drank, and how and where he worshipped God, were purely personal matters, having no bearing upon his ability or his right to lead the nation. He called the electorate back to debate of platform issues and of his record as legislator and administrator.

As to the party platforms, a question may well be raised as to whether they have ever played so important a role as Smith suggests. Selected planks are always debated. More are ignored. Some were debated and more ignored in 1928. Had the campaign discussions followed the lines of thought set forth in the platforms, they would have dealt with the following political and economic policies, adopted at the recent party conventions:

The Republican statement opened with an endorsement "without qualification" of the record of the incumbent administration.<sup>1</sup> It pointed out that the White House had been in

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<sup>1</sup>The 1928 platforms of both parties are to be found in Kirk H. Porter and Donald Bruce Johnson, National Party Platforms, 1840-1956 (Urbana: the University of Illinois Press, 1956), pp. 270-291.

Republican hands during fifty-two of the seventy-two years since the creation of the Party.

The Democrats invoked the spirit of Woodrow Wilson, and viewed with alarm agriculture prostrate, industry depressed, shipping destroyed, workmen unemployed, and government corrupt. They raised the cry, "Turn the rascals out."

Economy.--The Republicans claimed sound policies, the successful restoration of a peace-time economy, and reduction of the national debt by \$6,411,000,000.

The Democrats called for a "business-like re-organization of all departments of government," which Al Smith would have been delighted to carry out. They pointed out that debt reduction was made possible only by the reduction of wartime expenditures without parallel reduction of taxes; by the sale of war surplus goods, and by failure to supply the necessary funds to important government activities.

Taxation.--The Republicans claimed four tax reductions, which had brought the tax rates to peace-time levels.

The Democrats claimed to have proposed three reductions unsuccessfully. They further advocated a "sinking fund" to extinguish the national debt in a "reasonable" period of time.

Tariff.--The Republicans claimed that the protective tariff had given the nation its prosperity. It should be maintained with only those revisions necessary in order to keep pace with changing world markets.

The Democrats spoke of the aims not the means of an ideal tariff, and differed from their opponents in an emphasis upon prevention of monopolies, distributing the tariff burden equitably, and the desirability of taking tariff regulation out of executive hands and placing it in the control of a Wilsonian Tariff Commission.

Agriculture.--The Republicans recognized a nationwide farm problem as they had in their platform on 1924. They recommended tariff protection, improved transportation facilities, encouragement of voluntary cooperatives, and the promotion of export markets.

The Democrats accused the administration of giving the farmer nothing but promises. They held that it is impossible to solve the problem of surpluses by control of production. They advocated more government control by loans to cooperatives and through the creation of a Federal Farm Board.

Trusts.--The Republicans made no mention of trusts.

The Democrats called for more vigorous anti-trust legislation and prosecution.

Foreign policy.--The Republicans endorsed the renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy; they commended the work of the Pan American Conference recently concluded in Havana. They called for international commercial treaties, and for the continued development of over-seas

trade. They expressed concern for the establishment of a stable government in Nicaragua, and promised protection to Americans in residence there. But in pursuit of the American policy of non-interference in the affairs of other nations, America should stay out of the League, participating only in certain economic and humanitarian organizations at its fringe.

The Democrats accused the administration of possessing no foreign policy except one of drift. They approved "outlawry of war," freedom from entangling alliances, and protection of American rights over-seas. They desired more international conferences and reproved the Armaments Conference of 1921 for its failure to limit submarines, destroyers, and poison gas. The policy of non-interference should exclude the current intervention in Nicaragua and Mexico. The Filipino people had fulfilled the only requisite condition to independence, and it should be given to them forthwith.

Law enforcement.--On the thorny issue of the Prohibition laws, the Republicans declared:

The people through the method provided by the Constitution have written the Eighteenth Amendment into the Constitution. The Republican party pledges itself and its nominees to the observance and vigorous enforcement of this provision of the Constitution.

The Democrats, after rebuking the administration for its failure to enforce the law, submitted a similar plank, significantly failing to capitalize the words "eighteenth amendment":

Speaking for the national Democracy, this convention pledges the party and its nominees to an honest effort to enforce the eighteenth amendment and all other provisions of the federal Constitution and all laws enacted pursuant thereto.

When Al Amith, listening in Albany, heard the prohibition plank, he sent a wire of protest to the Houston Convention, but the "Drys" were not to be moved.<sup>1</sup>

Of all the principles and policies expressed in these platforms, the Democratic candidate considered four to be major campaign issues:

Government ownership of water power sites, government relief for agriculture, scientific and business-like treatment of the tariff, and sane, sensible amendment to the Constitution and the Volstead Act to produce real temperance as against the prevailing conditions so much complained of by leading men and women of every political faith.<sup>2</sup>

But for the most part, the Democratic position was a "me too" position. The Party had been badly defeated in 1924, and it could not campaign against prosperity. Leuchtenberg comments that

On every important issue, the Democratic platform of 1928 paralleled that of the Republicans. As Newton Baker ruefully observed, "McKinley could have run on the tariff plank and Lodge on the one on international relations."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, Up To Now, p. 378.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 383.

<sup>3</sup>William E. Leuchtenburg, The Perils of Prosperity (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 234.

Certainly on the Prohibition plank, Hoover could have run more comfortably than could Smith. The respective platforms would not serve as an adequate battle-ground for the campaign of 1928.

*This is a rather unique campaign because of the apparent widespread attempt to distract the American people from the real issues and to fasten their minds on un-democratic and un-American secret propaganda.*

The candidate invites comparison with another of a century earlier--Andrew Jackson, 1828.<sup>1</sup> Both Smith and Jackson were tradition breakers. Jackson was the first candidate from the West; Smith was the first from the great city. Both represented the common man, a newer America. Before Jackson, all presidential candidates had been aristocrats; before Smith, all Protestants. Both were caught up in a violent, vituperative campaign.

Jackson's election permitted a test of whether the values he represented were truly American. History has judged in his favor, and his party has installed him among its saints. But Smith's defeat prevented--or long delayed--an answer to the twentieth century's test question: Were these other crowds, waiting on the human frontier, equally American--the urban masses, the immigrants, the racial and religious minorities?

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<sup>1</sup>William B. Monroe, "Jackson and Smith: Two Battling Democrats--A Century Apart," Century Magazine, Vol. XVI, No. 6 (October, 1928), pp. 641-645.



The question, "What is an American?" would not receive its final answer in 1928, but Smith was making sure that the question was clearly raised.

He proposed to use in his defense the enemy's own language of abuse. Here were four words which typically belonged in the vocabulary of those who attacked the history, the aims, and the methods of the organization which Smith embodied. They had represented it as "un-democratic," "un-American," "secret," and making use of "propaganda" to gain its ends. The abusive language was familiar. Now Smith used the some words, characterizing the accusers as guilty of their own accusations. And artfully, he did so before introducing the topic of the speech. Thus early they were branded as the conspirators, while he stood in the clear light of Americanism. They had introduced an unfamiliar and subversive element, while he stood in defense of the older and more trustworthy order. They were moving in dark and secret avenues of subversion and would distract the people, while he would "look at the record."

*I propose, therefore, tonight to take full advantage of your warm welcome, because as I looked into the faces of the people that greeted me along the line of march today, I must say that I saw no difference between them and the people of the great city or the great countryside of my own State of New York.*

His urban origin was a campaign issue of which Smith was too alert to remain unaware. It may well have been a

handicap as great as those he was willing to acknowledge more openly. It would not be openly discussed tonight, but it might be forestalled by a tactful phrase, "I saw no difference between them and the people of the great city . . ."

Could a man reared under the Brooklyn Bridge find common ground with these sons of the plains? How many of them were asking, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" As the campaign train had rolled through open prairies, the candidate, gazing from its windows, had seen a foreign land. He had travelled little; what did he really know of the West? That the air was pure and the sun bright; that a man was a man who asked to be taken only for what he was. And of the South? That Magnolia bloomed 'round the door while someone hummed the blues and steamboats appeared on the Swanee. But these were creations of his own Broadway, and they did not include a Senator Heflin of Alabama or Owen of Oklahoma.

Al Smith was city-born, city-bred, and city-hearted. If the country and the city do make different kinds of men, until 1928 the nation had relied upon the one not the other to supply its national leaders. Chester Arthur and Theodore Roosevelt were New Yorkers, but Arthur had come to the city from Vermont, and Roosevelt had his youthful formation on a Dakota ranch and his mother was a Southern belle. Al Smith was the first to be born amid din and squalor.

Some of the voters and their spokesmen claimed to see "no reason why the back alley cannot produce as good moral, spiritual, mental and physical timber for politics

as the backwoods."<sup>1</sup> Hapgood and Moscowitz, though favorably disposed toward the candidate, yet voiced the familiar doubt:

It will be decades before we reach any final conclusion about whether our crowded streets are less promising soil for greatness than the solitary furrow and the village store.<sup>2</sup>

To Bishop Cannon, New York City was Satan's seat, and the Bishop would move through the southern back country in a campaign for rural virtue.<sup>3</sup> William Allen White tempered his concern with historical perspective:

We may be facing new issues in our politics, based for the first time upon the conflicting interests, the conflicting morals, the conflicting aspirations of a rural civilization as those interests, morals, and aspirations clash in a nation which is rapidly becoming industrialized and urban. Hence Al Smith--with his pink-and-white skin, his pink-and-crimson tie and the scarlet border of his handkerchief, his silk socks and conventional gray trousers--becomes something more than a sporadic figure in our politics. He becomes the symbol of a mighty challenge to our American traditions, a challenge which, if it wins in the struggle which may ensue, will bring deep changes into our American life.<sup>4</sup>

Aware of the problem, Smith was trying to bridge the gap. Though he could not change the city or himself, he could minimize the differences. He had sometimes succeeded in the past, as when he visited the Lincoln birthplace and

<sup>1</sup>William Allen White, "Al Smith, City Feller," Collier's, Vol. LXXVIII, No. 8 (August 21, 1926), p. 8.

<sup>2</sup>Hapgood and Moxcowitz, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup>Oscar Handlin, Al Smith and His America (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1958), p. 132.

<sup>4</sup>White, p. 8.

expressed a wish that every American boy could see that cabin.<sup>1</sup> He had more often failed to try, as when, confronted by a reporter full of leading questions on the national level, he asked sardonically, "What states are west of the Mississippi?"<sup>2</sup>

Tonight he would seek to minimize the differences. But he let the bands play the "Sidewalks of New York"; he wore the brown derby where a derby had seldom appeared; and spoke in the accents of the Bowery. He claimed to see "no difference" between the people who had lined the afternoon streets of Oklahoma City and his beloved East Siders. Tonight he was thinking wishfully.

*I propose, therefore, to take advantage of the warm welcome and discuss this whole proposition in an open, frank way. I propose to drag out into the open what has been whispered to you.*

One could always depend upon a Smith speech to have a topic. One of the pointed contrasts between the campaign speeches of Smith and those of his opponents, particularly Hoover and Hughes, was in Smith's restricting himself to a single theme per speech, while they attempted to deal, at least briefly, with all the major issues at each city. Smith's speech of acceptance dealt with many things,

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, Up To Now, p. 401.

<sup>2</sup>Pringle, p. 97.

of course, for it was a general statement of policy, but the others were quite specifically topical. On this trip, the subjects were as follows:

Omaha, Neb.	September 18	Agriculture
Oklahoma City	September 20	Religion
Denver, Col.	September 22	Power
Helena, Mon.	September 24	Scandals
St. Paul, Min.	September 27	Government Reform
Milwaukee, Wis.	September 29	Prohibition
Louisville, Ken.	October 13	Tariff <sup>1</sup>

He was conscious of the values of topical speaking:

I have made it a point to devote an entire evening to a given subject, and to exhaust it so far as that evening is concerned, giving my audience enough of the details to let them have a pretty thorough understanding of just what I am aiming at.<sup>1</sup>

What he was aiming at on Thursday night at the Stockyards Coliseum had been a half-kept secret. He had felt free to announce as early as September 15 in New York that the topic at Omaha would be farm problems, but he would not disclose what he would take up at Oklahoma City. The Daily Oklahoman reported on that date:

He explained he didn't know what his theme would be there.

"If I did, I wouldn't want to talk. The committee on suggestions--a self-appointed committee," he said with a grin, "would be too active."

Some of the Governor's advisors have been urging him to discuss what they term a "whispering" campaign against him in his Oklahoma City talk.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, Up To Now, p. 385.

<sup>2</sup>Daily Oklahoman, September 15, 1928, p. 1.

Aided by hind-sight, one may learn from these lines (1) that something about the Oklahoma City subject required a secrecy that did not apply to farm problems at Omaha, (2) that other persons were pressing their plans upon him, and (3) that his aides were prepared to leak the secret to an enquiring press.

In Oklahoma the next day, the Governor's advance man, Charles Hand, was less reticent, raising hopes that Smith would touch on Prohibition and religious intolerance:

A straightforward treatment of these two and other issues will do much to pacify the bolting Democrats, the leaders aver. A treatment of the issues by Smith himself will do the campaign more good than anything that can happen in the campaign, they said.<sup>1</sup>

Aboard the campaign train on the morning of the speech, the Governor was still declining to give precise information, but newspaper correspondents accompanying him had obtained a promise that this would be "the most significant speech of his campaign tour of the south and west":

Talking straight from the shoulder and not mincing words he probably will pay his respects to those who have been attacking his public record and his stand on prohibition.

More than likely he will discuss religion and religious tolerance, and in Oklahoma, probably more than anywhere else, he will assail party bolters.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Daily Oklahoman, September 16, 1928, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., September 20, 1928, p. 1.

A careful balance of secrecy and advertisement by controlled leak was doubtless calculated to raise the level of interest.

Smith later gave the impression that he made the decision as to topic after arrival in Oklahoma City:

I was met at Oklahoma City by an enormous crowd and it was quite apparent to me that the foremost issue so far as that part of the country was concerned was religion. I therefore determined to make by speech that night on the subject of religious tolerance.<sup>1</sup>

He may have meant that, though the speech was already written, there still remained doubt as to whether it should be delivered, and the final decision awaited his estimate of the audience and the occasion. He reports opposition from some, at least, of his advisors to his making such a speech at any point in the campaign:

I listened to both sides of the argument and concluded that inasmuch as I had personal knowledge of the underhand attacks and the undercurrent of the whispering campaign that was being conducted against me and my family and as I personally had knowledge of the scurrilous, blasphemous literature being circulated throughout the country against me and my people, I felt deep in my heart that I would be a coward and probably unfit to be President if I were to permit it to go further unchallenged. Without any thought of the consequences I went into it with all the vigor I could command.<sup>2</sup>

The decision made, he would be frank; he would "drag it out in the open."

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, Up To Now, p. 395.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 396.

*I want to first direct my attention to the statement printed in the Congressional Record in the form of a letter from your own former Senator of this State directed to Senator Simmons. (A voice: "He ain't ours."--laughter and applause.)*

*Well listen. That may be so, that may be so. But he has raised the issue and let us adopt him for tonight, no matter what we do with him tomorrow.*

Audience "feedback" and speaker response such as this occurred throughout the speech. The verbatim transcript records only the clearest voices, the most significant audience remarks and those which drew a response in return from the candidate. Radio listeners friendly to the Governor were disturbed, for primitive equipment had reduced all audience sounds to an angry roar. Both the governor and his daughter felt that the audience was his, and that much of the uproar was produced by one man half-way back who kept shouting, "Pour it on 'em, Al."<sup>1</sup> The stenographer records none of the "Pour it on 'em" responses, but fifty-nine times he notes audience reactions in the speech text: "applause," "loud applause," and "laughter" are most frequent. At the close there is "prolonged applause." Once a voice is noted saying, "That is plenty." Smith follows with, "Now there is another lie." Once, having asked for a response, "Let me ask you in all candor and in all frankness . . .," he seems to fear that the response may get out of hand and

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<sup>1</sup>Warner and Daniel, p. 219.



he adds, "and you don't need to answer it except by looking at me with a smile (that's what you will have to do)."

At one point, when the audience had responded with "loud noises," he was compelled to ask for silence: "We are losing time on the radio. Please wait." Only twenty-eight words later, the stenographer again records "applause."

The speaker was in control; he was an excellent judge of audience mood, and he was able to respond flexibly to "feedback." This had been rehearsed in the legislature and on the stump.

*In the course of the letter he declared to the American people through the medium of the Congressional Record, an abuse of the privilege of franking and of reading matter into the Record--he proclaimed that he opposed me because I am a member of Tammany Hall.*

"The primary objection to Smith is his Catholicism," the New York Times editorialized. "His wet views come second; his Tammany affiliations third."<sup>1</sup> But the Times was supporting Smith and their comment was a rebuke of the opposition's motives. When the opposition explained its objections, the three issues were more likely to be made in reverse order and Smith's connections with Tammany became the most respectable form the attacks upon him could take.

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, October 3, 1928, p. 3.

If Senator Owen and his friends found themselves unable or unwilling to distinguish among several objections to Smith's candidacy, they were not alone. The 1928 campaign was one of "social" issues: prohibition, alienism, urbanism, religion, and morality,<sup>1</sup> and it is probably no co-incidence that all of them could be masked under an attack upon Tammany Hall, for it was "Wet," Irish, city, Catholic, and corrupt.

Tammany was also old. Smith once eulogized it with the dubious logic that nothing that had endured 139 years could be bad. It was named for a legendary Indian chief and lawgiver.<sup>2</sup> Its Indian costumes, titles, and rituals were largely dropped during the War of 1812 when Indians became anathema, but the club survived. Shortly after the Revolution, Aaron Burr, who was friendly with some of Tammany's leaders, had gained its support in his successful bid for the vice-presidency and it has never ceased to be a political organization, at times synonymous with New York Democracy.<sup>3</sup>

Its corruption under such leaders as William M. Tweed and Richard Croker is proverbial, but there was another side of Tammany. It existed by looking after the interests

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<sup>1</sup>Edmund A. Moore, A Catholic Runs for President (New York: Ronald Press Co., 1956) p. 117.

<sup>2</sup>M. R. Werner, Tammany Hall (New York: Doubleday, Doran and Co., 1931), p. 1.

<sup>3</sup>Gustavus Meyers, History of Tammany Hall (New York: By the author, 1901), p. 13-19.

of those who resided in its district. There were funeral expenses to be paid; jobs to be found; police to be transferred or promoted; someone was sick or in jail or a family had newly arrived from the Old Country. Tammany did these jobs, did them well and thankful votes were the only payment extracted.<sup>1</sup>

Of course, Tammany lived at the public expense; partly by the public payroll, and partly through small graft from small business. When the basis of politics is doing favors, little graft is a natural and perhaps inevitable consequent. Sometimes there was big graft, but it was not so characteristic of Tammany as it had been of certain Republican machines. Not so closely organized at the neighborhood level, Republican contacts were rather with big business. Hence it may be that their machines have seen less of petty graft and "more of the large, smoother, more hidden and more lucrative relations between the politician and the man with money."<sup>2</sup>

Tammany's ways were Smith's political education. He was the faithful contact man in his neighborhood, and in the Legislature he was Boss Murphy's voice. His subsequent career was a political miracle, for no Tammany man had ever aspired so high. Their prospects had been limited by their origin, by their lack of education, and by their religion.

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<sup>1</sup>Hapgood and Moscovitz, pp. 40-41.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 44.

True, there were rewards in store--small but cherished honors and financial gain, but at election time practical political demands placed a Protestant at the head of the national ticket.<sup>1</sup>

Smith had honest, courage, and intellectual equipment equal to his aspirations, but as he climbed the ladder of elective office, to what extent must he remain Tammany's tool? Tammany was not so concerned with legislation as with the distribution of spoils--contracts and appointive offices. Experience as an executive impressed upon Smith the need for ability in appointees; political necessity led him to make many non-partisan appointments. To what extent had Tammany surrendered its rights to its aspiring graduate?

Several factors permitted him more freedom than was commonly believed by outsiders to be possible. First, pride in his accomplishment encouraged Tammany to give him increasing leeway as he moved up the elective ladder. Secondly, Tom Foley and Charles Murphy believed in him, and quietly spread the word that he was to be let alone to make patronage decisions. Hapgood and Moscovitz report Foley as saying upon his election as Governor, "Go on, do your best. I have given everybody orders to lay off and give you a chance to do your duty."<sup>2</sup> Thirdly, his personal popularity outside the city eventually became a factor with "coat-tail" effect that Tammany could scarcely ignore. Fourthly, by 1924 he

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<sup>1</sup>Handlin, pp. 66-67.

<sup>2</sup>Hapgood and Moscovitz, p. 51.

had so effectively asserted his leadership of the state party that Tammany's policies became the policies imposed by Smith, and his integrity would for a time and to a degree cleanse its sins.

Two events served to give Smith his freedom from the dictates of the Hall. One was the death, in 1924, of Boss Charles Murphy, leaving a power vacuum which Smith was best prepared to fill. The other was his victory over William Randolph Hearst. Practical politics had made bedfellows of the publisher and Tammany, but Smith, in 1922, at odds both with Hearst's policies and his appointment demands, broke openly with him and refused to run on any ticket which included Hearst. When Tammany found neither the will nor the means to discipline the insurgent candidate, he emerged its master.<sup>1</sup>

There were inevitable influences upon him, of course, for the old cronies were not far removed. There were rumblings of discontent when he abandoned the old home on Oliver Street. There were complaints when he surrounded himself with intellectual advisors, many of them Jews: Judge Proskauer, Robert Moses, and the Moscovitzes. There were outcries when he made non-political appointments, some of them to Republicans who would not deliver a single vote in the precincts.

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<sup>1</sup>The Smith-Hearst controversy is conveniently condensed by Pringle, pp. 21-32.

They could no longer control him, but they would get what they could from his great position and support him for high office, priding themselves that he was one of their own. Nor would Smith re-make them in his own political image; but he could keep their organization clean in its way, and he would never deny the debt he owed it, nor permit it to be defamed in his presence.

The political liabilities which Tammany Hall entailed rode with him to Oklahoma City and accompanied him to defeat in November. Tammany had been evil, and it was still less than a model of good government. But beyond that, it was a whipping-boy, a convenient cover for all the less presentable accusations his enemies might hesitate to bring.

*Now, I can understand why Republicans are against me. (Laughter.) All you have got to do is to come up to my own state and you will get abundant reason for that. I have been licking them around that State for ten years. (Loud applause.) And when I went into the Governorship first they regarded me as an accident, and freely predicted that I was only there for a short time. And I can understand that they are afraid to let me get into that White House in Washington for fear I may make as long a stay there as I did in the Executive Mansion at Albany. (Loud applause.)*

*But when a member of my own party, a man who for so many years was signally honored by the Democratic Party, on that flimsy pretext advises the people of his State and of his country not to vote for me, I challenge the truth and the honesty of his purpose. (Applause.) And*

*I declare that the statement was only a cover for a treason against the principles of Jeffersonian democracy and of true, loyal Americanism. (Applause.)*

Senator Owen was the first prominent Democrat to desert his party's candidate. He was one of Oklahoma's most respected political figures, a synonym of integrity. In 1926, after eighteen years in the United States Senate, he had voluntarily withdrawn from public life, established a law practice in Washington, and given himself to the writing of books on finance and on the causes of war.<sup>1</sup> Ex-governor William Holloway recently said of him: "Robert L. Owen was one of the most brilliant men we've ever had." He was also the "finest looking man" that Holloway had ever known, part Cherokee Indian, and "like a Greek god."<sup>2</sup>

The New York Times, noting that Owen had been an outstanding leader in the Senate and in his party, gave front page space to his defection from Smith:

He is the first Democrat of prominence to take a stand for Hoover . . . .

He gave as his reason for deserting the candidate of his own party, the latter's wetness and Tammany affiliation and his high regard for Secretary Hoover . .

. . "I think I have a sense of personal responsibility that prompts me to take my stand openly with the side I believe is right, regardless of personal consequences.

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<sup>1</sup>Gaston Litton, History of Oklahoma, Vol. I (New York: Lewis Historical Pub. Co., 1957), p. 562.

<sup>2</sup>Interview with William J. Holloway, Oklahoma City, April 8, 1965.

<sup>3</sup>New York Times, July 26, 1928, p. 1.

On the following day, Smith challenged "the sincerity of the Oklahoman's attack on Tammany Hall," declaring that the former Democratic Senator's announced hostility to Tammany must be a new development because in 1924 during the dead-locked national convention, Mr. Owen had sought to win his influence and the support of the Tammany delegation in behalf of his own candidacy for the Presidential nomination.

"Senator Owen called to see me at the Manhattan Club and asked me to use my influence to secure for him the support of the Tammany delegation . . . . His hostility to Tammany must have grown up in his heart in the last four years."<sup>1</sup>

Owen, asked about the incident, replied, "What has that got to do with it?" In answer to a charge by Senator Edwards of New Jersey that his attack had been motivated by anti-Catholicism, he had a clearer response:

"I have never criticized "Tammany--the Catholic." I am notoriously tolerant but I do not approve the Senator's unfair political appeal to American Catholics on the ground . . . that no one dare criticize Tammany without being charged with criticizing the Church itself and charged with intolerance and bigotry."<sup>2</sup>

After the Oklahoma City speech, Owen again expressed resentment against Smith for impugning his motives, repeating his assertion that it was the criminal history of the

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, July 27, 1928, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., August 20, 1928, p. 4.



Tammany organization, not Catholicism, which disqualified Smith:

"My answer is that no man in the world has ever heard me say an unkind word about the Roman Catholic religion. My father was a Roman Catholic. My brother-in-law is a Roman Catholic, and my lawyer is a Roman Catholic. I never at any time in my public life discriminated against a man because he was a Catholic or because of his religion whatever it was."<sup>1</sup>

Smith doubtless found rhetorical advantage in using the Owen charge as a device for unifying his speech, giving it point and local interest; but the charge he brought against Owen--that his anti-Tammany attack cloaked anti-Catholicism--was an imputation of motive to which Smith was never able to bring evidence in support. As to the charges and denials over the Madison Square Garden incident, neither was able to bring evidence or witness. It was one man's word against the other, with the name of Owen held in high honor in his home State.

Owen's defection doubtless hurt. Two days before the Oklahoma City speech, the anti-Smith Democratic forces announced that Owen would make three speeches in the State on behalf of Herbert Hoover's candidacy.<sup>2</sup> This group allied itself with a national anti-Smith Democratic organization, declaring:

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., September 22, 1928, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup>Daily Oklahoman, September 18, 1928, p. 12.

"Party obligation is a dual matter. A party nominee must be faithful to the party as announced in its platform, to be worthy of the loyalty of party leadership. Governor Smith has bolted the Houston platform on prohibition and on immigration restriction, and by his own acts has released Democrats from any obligation to accord him support."<sup>1</sup>

Smith's charge against Owen--anti-Catholicism--was unsupported. Owen's charge against Smith--that he was tainted by Tammany's corruption--Smith would now seek to refute, not by a whitewash of the Hall or any further mention of it, but by a recital of his own accomplishments.

*Now, the last thing a man cares to do is to talk about himself. I am a rather modest kind of creature. I do not like to do it. I would like to fight this campaign out on the platforms of the two parties and on the record of my opponent and upon the record of the party that espoused them; but the real issue of my record has been raised, and I will deal with it here tonight in cold, clear, plain, every-day language, so that there will be no mistake about it. And I think I can be pardoned for the assertion that I am rather proud of that record. I am proud of it because it was made in the pitiless sunlight of publicity, going back over a quarter of a century.*

"Let's look at the record," says the Governor. He had already stated that the issues in a campaign should be the platform and the candidates. In this section he discussed the accomplishments, ability, and character of one

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., September 19, 1928, p. 12.

candidate; Mr. Hoover is not mentioned. To sell himself to the electorate is the task of every candidate, but more so for Smith in the face of Protestant concern that a Catholic could not lead the nation, since he differed from "true Americans" in culture and moral commitment. Regarded thus, his problem was one of ethos, and he was willing to devote a large early segment of the speech to establishing a groundwork of confidence in himself.

As a Catholic he was obliged to show himself to be American of the Americans. This he attempted to do by: (1) outlining his career in elective office (demonstrating his competence), (2) listing his political aims and ideals (demonstrating his good will), and (3) bringing numerous testimonials from respected persons (demonstrating his good character).

In so doing, he did not appear in uniformly favorable light. "Looking at the record" through the Smith eyes may have overstepped the fine line of small-town modesty. The personal pronoun occurred 105 times in this part of the speech. Only twice was the plural "we" used. There was not the momentary relief of a touch of humility; he admitted to no faults or weaknesses. He shared no credit with colleagues --seldom with a Democratic legislature. Only the voters were credited with good sense; they had returned him repeatedly to office. When he lost, the Harding landslide was to blame; when he was victorious, other Democrats rode to victory on his coattails.

It must be noted that he was under severe attack; an attack which he considered unfair; not an attack upon his party, or even upon his principles or upon his performance, but upon his person. And his opponents had been often more immoderate than he. His fighting stance became that of a Tammany politician.

While it would scarcely be possible to recount his own record without repeated mention of New York, references to it as "the Great State of New York, and "the greatest State in the Union" were not calculated to make friends in a struggling pioneer land with but twenty-two years of statehood.

*Here it is: in 1903 I was first nominated as a member of the Assembly of the legislature of the State of New York, representing the district that I was born in, that my wife was born in, and that my father and mother were born in.*

Alfred Emmanuel Smith, Sr., was born in Oliver Street between South and Water.<sup>1</sup> Catherine Mulvihill was born at the corner of Dover and Water Streets, just three blocks from where her parents disembarked from a ship of the Black Ball Line from Ireland a few years earlier.<sup>2</sup> The neighborhood was to be Smith country for a century. It was the Fourth Ward, bounded on the east by the busy river, on the

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, Up To Now, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

south by South Street, on the north by East Broadway and on the west by the Bowery.<sup>1</sup> New York in the 1879's was, even more than now, a city of neighborhoods. No one could grow up in this one without viewing the harshness of life. There were broken men and women in the Bowery. There were sailors and their vices on the docks, and poverty enough to go around. From their stoops, good Irish families could see the wicked world, but they did not have to belong to it. Stately clipper ships stood in the docks; there was the river for swimming, and the Brooklyn Bridge was under construction overhead. And there was the Roman Catholic Church of St. James in James Street, the spiritual, educational and social center of the parish of 18,000 souls.

Into this dock-side, Irish Catholic, tenement ward Alfred E. Smith, Jr., was born on December 30, 1873, in a row-house at 174 South Street.<sup>2</sup> He grew up with the Brooklyn Bridge which obviously made a greater impression upon him than all the ships in the river. His education was had in the parochial school. he was both a newsboy and an altar boy. "Did you go to church every day?" the Governor was once asked. His answer tells much about childhood on the lower east side: "What else was there to do?"<sup>3</sup> Father Kean

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<sup>1</sup>Hapgood and Moscoqitz, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup>Smith, Up To Now, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup>Hapgood and Moscowitz, p. 9.

organized fifteen societies, including a Rifle Guard, a Longshoreman's Protective Society, the Ladies' Sodality, a Free School Society, a Choir and a Theatrical Club.<sup>1</sup> Alfred joined those appropriate to his age and interests.

His father died when Alfred was twelve, and school ended a year later. He became a runner for a drayage firm. His mother worked in an umbrella shop, bringing home piece-work at night, later opened a candy store in the vacant premises below the home. At sixteen, Alfred was an office boy for Clarkson and Ford, an oil company.<sup>2</sup> He advanced in wages if not in status by taking a job in the Fulton Fish Market at twelve dollars a week and all the fish the family could eat. In later years, he would call this his college education.

It was sometimes hard, but it was not a grinding poverty, for these were vigorous, self-reliant people, and they helped one another. There was work to be had. And they had their church. A boy did not stray far from home, far from mother or far from his priest.

Or far from Tammany Hall. His political interests began with a clerkship in the office of Judge Thomas Allison, where his main task was to deliver summons to jury duty. His popularity was thus that of "a razor-blade manufacturer at a barbers' convention," but at sixty dollars a month he

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Frank Graham, Al Smith: American (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1945), p. 18.

could bear the showers of abuse.<sup>1</sup> "I had a choice of hard labor at a small wage, . . . or easier work at a greater wage. I had a fondness for politics and I liked the excitement of public life."<sup>2</sup>

At the age of eighteen he began to frequent the Downtown Tammany Club, where he impressed the local Democratic boss, Tom Foley. With Tammany's endorsement, he ran for the State Assembly from the Second Assembly District. It was 1903, and two years had passed since Smith had supported Foley in his successful contest against Divver for control of the party in the district. This was his first tangible reward. Pat Whalen had occupied the seat in 1901 and 1902, but he was neglecting headquarters duties, and must be replaced.<sup>3</sup> Foley's support was equal to nomination, and nomination was equal to election in the Democratic Second District.

The young Assemblyman had little idea of what Albany would bring him over the years:

At eleven o'clock, I took my first oath of office, and very little did I dream that I would take seventeen oaths of office in that same chamber. I should hate to have to tell you my opinion of the mental condition of the man who at the time would have suggested to me that in that same room I would take the oath as Governor four times.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, Up To Now, p. 56.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Warner and Daniel, p. 46.

<sup>4</sup>Smith, Up To Now, p. 70.

Smith had been married at the age of twenty-six to Catherine Dunn, Irish, Catholic and born in the Fourth Ward, though lately living in the Bronx. Smith always liked to say that it was a happy marriage from the start:

I little dreamed of the happiness that was to come into my life when I made that accidental visit to the Bronx. no one could have been more unselfish or devoted than my wife in all the years of our married life . . . . She has always been the head of the household and was christened by one of the children Chairman of the House Committee . . . .

She made it a point to attend every public meeting at which I spoke in New York City or Albany, and went with me to many public meetings in other parts of the State. When I arose to speak, after I had her located, I felt I was all right.<sup>1</sup>

Five little Smiths appeared, each born in a different house because of growing need for space and because the family seemed to choose old houses doomed for demolition. Alfred, Emily, Catherine, Arthur, and Walter, all began their lives in the Fourth Ward as had their parents and grandparents.

*I represented that district for twelve successive years. At the end of that period I was elected Sheriff of the County of New York. Two years later I was Elected President of the Board of Aldermen of that city and, in 1918, the Democratic Convention, assembled in the city of Saratoga, nominated me for the office of governor.*

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 64-65.



The years from 1904 to 1916 produced the steady growth of an expert in the art of government. The beginnings were humble enough. A Tammany aid bought him two suits; "The old neighborhood should have as well dressed an Assemblyman as the uptown people have."<sup>1</sup> He continued to work as a summons server till the first of the year, for the family had to live. At Albany the salary was \$1,500 per year and ten cents a mile for traveling expense.

Heeding the Foley advice, "Don't speak till you have something to say," it was two years before his voice was heard on the Assembly floor.<sup>2</sup> The Republican speaker was of the old school; he made nothing easy for the newcomer. Though Smith was discouraged, the legislative session occupied only four months of each year and he enjoyed the work at home in the off-season. The Irish have excelled in politics at the local level, where success is the reward of personal charm and small favors.

In 1905 he was appointed to the Committee on Banks and the one on Public Lands and Forestry. "I . . . had never seen a forest." he said.<sup>3</sup> That summer, with the alternative of becoming Superintendent of Buildings in New York City, he almost gave up the legislature. But he had never quit anything, and the challenge held him.

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<sup>1</sup>Warner and Daniel, p. 50.

<sup>2</sup>Smith, Up To Now, p. 76.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 74.

The next year was better. A new Speaker, James W. Wadsworth, Jr., brought Smith into the inner councils. He sat on the Insurance Committee for which Charles Evans Hughes was counsel. He was learning his trade. That year he introduced sixteen bills.<sup>1</sup> That he was becoming an effective legislator was attested by the critical Citizen's Union of New York, a non-partisan body which rated politicians for the guidance of the voters. In 1906 this group declared that Smith was "intelligent and active, somewhat above average of machine men." In 1907 he was "one of the best Democratic representatives from New York." In 1908 he was "Increasingly active and aggressive; every much above average in intelligence, force and usefulness, though still inclined to follow machine in support of bad measures."<sup>2</sup>

The elections of 1910 returned a Democratic governor, John A. Dix, and majorities in both houses of the legislature; Smith's star rose. Moving to majority leader and the chairmanship of the Ways and Means Committee, he took the longest single step in this sixteen-year political career. He had been growing in political stature through the years and now, at thirty-seven, he was about to become more than a local political figure of the lower east side.

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<sup>1</sup>Warner and Daniel, p. 55.

<sup>2</sup>Pringle, pp. 151-152.

In 1912, there was a Republican majority, but the 1913 legislature contained 105 Democrats to only 45 Republicans, and Smith was Speaker of the House. Racked by political conflict, the legislature impeached its Democratic Governor, but it also produced an astonishing amount of needed legislation.

The Assembly period was fittingly climaxed by participation in the Constitutional Convention of 1915, which revised the bulky statutes of the state. Another delegate, Elihu Root, said when the work of the convention was completed, "Alfred E. Smith was the best informed on the business of New York State," and George W. Wickersham said that he was "the most useful man in the convention."<sup>1</sup>

The convention was not yet over when the Tammany executive committee voted to run Smith for the office of sheriff of New York County. He won overwhelmingly. While the job was not to his liking after the exciting days at Albany, it paid almost as much per week as the Assembly per year: \$12,000 per annum and half of all fees collected. The fees and the salary totaled \$105,000 during his two years in the office, a welcome financial relief after twelve years in Albany. He bought an automobile, a summer home and built an addition at 25 Oliver Street.

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<sup>1</sup>Warner and Daniel, p. 75.

At this point the prepared manuscript of the Oklahoma City speech reads:

Two years later I was elected to the position of President of the Board of Aldermen, which is really that of vice-mayor of the City of New York.

So it is, and Smith needed no urging to accept the nomination. No coalition reform government of New York City has ever succeeded itself. That of Mayor Mitchel was no exception. Hyman was swept in, and Smith as President of the Board of Alderman. This was politics again and he settled down to a four-year term, but he had scarcely become acquainted with the job when he was nominated for the office of governor.

Though It is true, as he says, that the convention in Saratoga made the official nomination, the leadership had left nothing to chance. At the previous meeting between Tammany and upstate Democratic leaders, a list of twenty candidates was sifted with an eye both to pleasing the two wings of the party and to the chances of victory. Nineteen were eliminated, and Smith's name was sent to the convention.

*In the Fall of 1918 I was elected Governor, although in that same election the only other Democrat elected on the State ticket with me was the Lieutenant Governor, the balance of the State ticket being overwhelmingly Republican, or all Republicans, the Legislature being also in the hands of the Republicans.*

In 1918, the first year of woman suffrage, Smith's opponents predicted that the woemn would vote against him because of his record on liquor. If they did, it was not in large numbers, and a Citizens' Committee was active in his behalf. The religious issue was raised in a fashion which he had not experienced in previous races, for his Second District was Catholic. When the city as a whole had chosen him Sheriff and Alderman, it had followed the established practice of a "balanced ticket"--a Catholic, a Protestant, and a Jew. But Protestants upstate were another thing. He felt that in Albany there was a sympathetic back-lash of resentment against bigotry; but he lost the rural areas around Buffalo and blamed intolerance in the harsh and wounded tones which would increase in their bitterness in 1928.<sup>1</sup>

The candidate needed every vote he could get. Early returns from the nearby areas seemed to show a safe lead, but it was reduced by the upstate districts to 7,500 and then increased again to 14,000 when the soldier vote was counted.<sup>2</sup> The Smith camp withstood charges of fraud in court, and though by Thursday the result was clear, the victory was not confirmed till the end of December by the Commissioner of Elections. In the candidate's own precinct, the count was 387 to 2.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, Up To Now, pp. 163-164.

<sup>2</sup>Pringle, p. 233.

<sup>3</sup>Smith, Up To Now, p. 168.

Few men have had better apprenticeship for the job. As Speaker and Majority leader he had watched the office from close range. He was aware of the theory of separation of the branches of government and of the difficulty of such separation in practice. He knew men and he knew the politics of the state. He would love the job.

Seated in a place of honor at the Inauguration Ball was the Governor's mother, very small and very proud. To friends she showed an aging post card. It was a picture of the Executive Mansion at Albany which Al had sent her when he was a freshman assemblyman in 1904. The message read:

Dear Mother: This is a picture of the Governor's residence. I'm going to work hard and stick to the ideals you taught me and some day--maybe--I'll occupy this house.

*In 1920 I was renominated. The whole Eastern part of this country felt the effect of the so-called Harding landslide. Warren G. Harding carried the State of New York by 1,160,000 plurality. I was defeated for Governor by only 70,000 plurality.*

Losing the election of 1920 confirmed Smith's belief that governors should serve a four-year term and should not be chosen in a presidential election year.<sup>1</sup> Once again in the governor's chair, he would urge a Constitutional amendment to that effect.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 220.

Not only was 1920 a Republican year, but it was a year of national issues, in which state questions were nearly submerged. Judge Nathan Miller, the Republican candidate, making capital of the fact, campaigned against the League of Nations and against the Wilson record. Smith, the expert in state government, felt obliged to answer with long speeches defending Article X of the Covenant.

Harding carried 61 of the 62 districts of New York State--all but Smith's own Second. Though Smith's margin of defeat was 70,000 he ran more than a million ahead of the national ticket, possibly the strongest candidacy of his career.

*I sought retirement to private life after a long public career, and to let you into my full confidence, I had as fine a job as a man ever had. I was boss of a big trucking company. We had 2,000 horses, 480-odd automobiles and about 2,500 employees (Applause.) I was enjoying the work immensely. I got an annual salary five times that of the salary of the Governor.*

Smith's administrative capacity, wide acquaintance and good name were eminently employable, and there was no shortage of offers from big business. But the far-sighted campaigner would not give ammunition to a future political opponent. Had he not denounced Miller as the tool of great wealth? The friend of the utilities trusts? The United States Trucking Corporation, a large firm controlled by friends of Smith, provided a solution. The Governor's father had been a trucker; Al had worked as a runner for a

trucking firm; and "Smith the trucker" would not hurt him on the hustings in 1922. The business was losing sixty thousand dollars a year, and he was to be president of the board at fifty thousand per annum.<sup>1</sup> He reported for work on the second of January and he worked hard. New business was found; the company was re-organized and put on a paying basis.

He became a director of the Morris Plan; he was made a board member of Pattison and Bowns, wholesale coal dealers, and a director of the National Surety Company. He enjoyed the work. Always conservative in economic matters, he became even more business-minded. He says of this interlude:

As I sat around the table with the other directors in these companies, listening to business problems and attempting to find a solution for them, I was impressed with how much government is like business if a man is minded to put business principles into government. My experience in the governorship, in the legislature and with the Port Authority was of benefit to me in the solution of business problems, and the businesslike attitude of the men I was associated with during those two years was likewise helpful to me in the adoption of business principles to be applied to government.<sup>2</sup>

The business interlude, 1921 and 1922, may have helped to confirm his already conservative economic views, permitting him later, in the midst of depression-born experiments, to brand Franklin Roosevelt as a dangerous radical.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 223.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 226.



*But in 1922 I was unable to withstand the pressure from the leaders of my party, and at the Democratic State Convention of 1922 I was unanimously nominated for Governor for the third time. (Applause.) And in that year I was elected by 387,000 plurality, a record plurality for the State of New York. (Applause.)*

Whether genuinely reluctant or politically sagacious, he allowed himself to be persuaded. In the summer of 1922 visitors to the United States Tucking Corporation brought stories of an organized movement to nominate William Randolph Hearst. Only Smith could stop him. To run again would be a financial sacrifice, but there was the call of duty; there may even have been a presidential bug.

An open letter from Franklin Roosevelt stated the feelings of the party:

Many candidates for office are strong by virtue of promises of what they will some day do. You are strong by virtue of promises of what you have done. . . .

I am asking you personally and publicly to accede to the wishes of so many of your fellow citizens.

Very truly yours,

Franklin D. Roosevelt

In a "Dear Frank" reply, he announced his willingness:

During the past twenty years I have been so honored by my party that even the members of my family would be dissatisfied if I did not answer the call.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Warner and Daniel, p. 132-134.

That was the end of the boom for Hearst as governor, and a new high point in Smith's political independence, for he withstood all efforts to permit Hearst on the ticket as a candidate for the United States Senate.<sup>1</sup> Even Tammany's Foley and Murphy would not or could not move him. Hearst threw the support of his papers to the Republicans.

The second bout with Miller was fought on local issues: three weeks upstate, one week in the city. The candidate had lost none of his political appeal; it may indeed have been the height of his attractiveness to the voters, and the sweetest victory of his long career.

*I had fully made up my mind to retire at the end of my second term. No Governor in fifty years has been elected for more than two terms.*

*My name was before the National Convention in Madison Square Garden. John W. Davis was nominated. The night he was nominated, I said to him, "What can I do for you? I am a Democrat. It makes no difference to me what took place in the convention, what can I do for you?" (Applause.)*

If he had "fully made up his mind to retire" in 1924, he must have meant from the governorship. For under the guidance of Judge Proskauer, connections outside the state were already being made through the year 1923 in preparation for the convention of the following year. The leaders were

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, Up To Now, p. 233.

George Brennan of Illinois and Norman Mack of Buffalo.<sup>1</sup> There were some factors in their favor. They felt they didn't have to win in 1924. Their man, at the age of fifty, was young enough to wait until 1928 or 1932. And the convention, after a concerted campaign to that end led by Herbert Bayard Swope, was to be held in New York's Madison Square Garden. The galleries would belong to Smith. It was important at least, that the Smith name become widely and favorably known in 1924, his strength demonstrated.

But even the selection of New York City as the convention site was divisive in the atmosphere of the country and the party in 1924. The bitter issue of Americanism gripped the decade. Sacco and Vanzetti became a cause celebre. There were bomb scares and the Palmer raids. Only a people sprung from disparate roots could plunge themselves into so much passion. Americans of the older stock had long felt an uneasiness which, in the face of recent national developments, and in the aftermath of war, had sharpened and deepened.

To Klansmen, to Prohibitionists, to Fundamentalists, to moralists and True Americans of all kinds, New York was an offense--Babylon, the city of sin, of Catholics, Jews, immigrants and foreigners, bootleggers, corruption, and Tammany Hall. Who were those shouting hordes in the gallery, demanding the nomination of Smith? They were the millions

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<sup>1</sup>Handlin, p. 116.

whom stricter immigration laws would never have permitted to enter. The aging William Jennings Bryan, hissed and booed from the galleries, flung the challenge back, "You do not represent the future of our country."<sup>1</sup>

The Ku Klux Klan was the deeply divisive issue at Madison Square Garden. When the vote was taken, it was over a choice of resolutions--a strong condemnation or a statement that straddled the issue. When the votes and the fractional votes were counted, the tally stood at 546.15 for the compromise; 542.85 for condemnation.<sup>2</sup>

This was the handwriting on the wall for Smith. Not that all the 546.15 would go to McAdoo, or that they were all anti-Catholic. But if that many found it expedient to conciliate the Klan by delicate wording of the platform, a two-thirds majority would not be found for Smith in 1924. There was, in fact, only one thing he could accomplish by seeking the nomination; he could defeat a candidate who had been willing, by his silence, to accept Klan support. He did that much and having done so, helped to rend the Party so completely that the nomination could finally come as a favor to no one, or with any hope of success in November.

The "Happy Warrior" speech put Smith's name into contention. While Franklin D. Roosevelt was chosen to deliver it, the speech was written by Judge Joseph Proskauer

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<sup>1</sup>Handlin, p. 123.

<sup>2</sup>Pringle, p. 309.

in consultation with Roosevelt and Herbert Bayard Swope.<sup>1</sup> It was a classic of its kind. Roosevelt at first objected to the "Happy Warrior" quote on the understandable grounds that Madison Square Garden was no proper place for Wordsworth; but Wordsworth prevailed:

This is the Happy Warrior; this is he  
Whom every man in arms should wish to be.

The band burst forth with "Sidewalks of New York" and "The Bowery." An unequalled demonstration stamped its way about the floor for seventy-three minutes.

The following day, among the last group of nominees, the name of John W. Davis was offered.

McAdoo received 431½ votes on the first ballot; Smith, 241. Seven hundred thirty-two were needed to nominate. McAdoo's peak was 530. Smith, on the 7th ballot, had 368, and was under pressure to withdraw in McAdoo's favor.<sup>2</sup> He was under equal pressure not to permit a Klan victory. He would withdraw only if McAdoo would also withdraw, which was finally done on July 9, the eleventh day of the meeting. Within four hours, and on the 103rd ballot, John W. Davis was chosen.

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<sup>1</sup>Warner and Daniel, pp. 159-160.

<sup>2</sup>Pringle, p. 300.

In response to a resolution, Smith came before the weary convention just before adjournment. In the face of this magnificent opportunity, he made one of the poorest speeches of his career. It seems important to examine it in light of certain similarities to the occasion and to the speech delivered at Oklahoma City.

He had friends on the floor and more in the galleries. And there were hostile elements; but they had been hearing about Smith for so long they were eager to see him. Judging by the affection of New Yorkers for the man, he must be charming, gracious and humorous. And by July 10 they needed charm and humor. He began well enough:

If you have been annoyed in any way by the various people with whom you have come into contact, in their zeal to expalin to you why I am the greatest man in the world, overlook it.<sup>1</sup>

With more of this tone and with some kind references to his recent opponent and a plea for unity behind the nominee, he might have accomplished what he came to do; but this was the kind of speech situation which had always shown the Governor at his worst. Discussion of the great issues was ended, and without a great issue, he was not a great speaker. He had never made a good speech on the Fourth of July or St. Patrick's Day, nor wanted to try.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, July 11, 1924, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup>Hapgood and Moscowitz, p. 311.

Now he was bitter and frustrated; and he reacted as he would four years later at Oklahoma City, with tactless boasting of his accomplishments in New York: the soldiers' bonus, the veterans' hospitals, the appropriation for schools, road building, the welfare laws.

We have the most enlightened factory code in the world, bar none. We have the most progressive workmen's compensation act. We have . . . legislation for the protection of women and children who are engaged in industrial enterprises.<sup>1</sup>

He made a scathing reference to governors who had recently been to a White House conference, made eloquent speeches, and then failed to carry out their promises. Some of those governors were in his audience.

We have helped agriculture. We have laid out a comprehensive plan for the development of parks and playgrounds and recreational places for the public of our state. And on top of it all we have reduced the taxes of the people by actual dollars and cents.<sup>2</sup>

All of which could only confirm the feeling of non-New Yorkers that the Empire State citizens and their governor believed themselves superior to the rest of the nation, but were, in fact, without taste or good manners. They saw a man who was tired and hurt, who had nothing to say on the issue that had hurt him, and who could only boast of accomplishments without sharing credit with those to whom he owed so much.

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<sup>1</sup>Times, July 11, 1924, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

The only redeeming features of this speech were his strong assumption of leadership of the Democracy in New York and his pledge to support the party's nominee.

*And he gave me the hardest task a man could give when he asked me to again run for Governor. Upon his urging I was nominated for the fourth time in 1924. Coolidge swept the State of New York by a plurality of 700,000, and the morning after election I was standing alone as the only Democrat elected. (Applause.)*

*In 1926 again I was persuaded by the leaders to carry the banner in another State battle, and I did so, and was again elected. This is the reason I can come down here and greet the people of Oklahoma after eight years as Governor of the greatest State in the Union. (Applause.)*

The 1924 campaign against Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., Smith considered his easiest. He spoke only once a day on a single topic. Colonel Roosevelt made sixteen speeches per day.<sup>1</sup> Coolidge carried New York by 850,000; Smith defeated Roosevelt by 108,651.<sup>2</sup> Again running a million ahead of his ticket, he emerged the largest political figure in the Party.

In 1926, the opponent was Ogden L. Mills, a man of such integrity that Smith believed the campaign would be conducted on a high level. But Mills had the "milk" issue

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, Up To Now, p. 293.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 294.



from the old Hearst-Smith controversy and the campaign was tempestuous. The margin of victory was 257,000.<sup>1</sup>

Will Rogers chided him humorously on his landslide victories: "The man you run against ain't a candidate, he is just a victim."<sup>2</sup>

At this point in the speech the prepared text says: "Consequently I am in a position to come before you tonight as the Governor of New York finishing his fourth term." The use of this sentence would have avoided the condescension of the phrase actually employed "I can come down here . . . as Governor of the greatest State in the Union." Oklahoma could scarcely be flattered by the provincial implications of this language. But stated in either fashion, the right to run was thus far based only on a vote-getting record, for the record of accomplishments had not yet been recited. While a vote for the Brown Derby in "the Greatest State in the Union" was not equivalent to victory at the national level, yet, in the prolonged absence of the Party from power in Washington, the ability to get votes was worthy of mention.

*Now, is it not reasonable to suppose that in the ordinary course of events such a performance in the largest State of the Union, backed by a record that*

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 359.

<sup>2</sup>New York Times, June 28, 1928, p. 7.

*nobody can dispute, it would be quite natural that my name would go before the national convention and there have the distinction of being the only man nominated on the first ballot in twenty years, with the exception of President Wilson's second nomination in 1916.*

It was Smith all the way at the convention held in Houston, Texas in 1928. No party leader in decades had so captured the imagination of his followers, save Bryan and LaFollette. The leadership of McAdoo had faded gradually since 1924, nor had it been passed to others. The Protestant rural Dry forces, still numerous, lacked a head.

It is one of the minor phenomena of the era that the only other serious contender was also a Catholic; Thomas Walsh of Montana. His attempt is not without significance. He was not at first widely known to be Catholic. He had come to the nation's attention as a senatorial prosecutor of the Republican scandals growing out of the Harding administration. He was a Dry from a dry state. He was not remotely connected with the tainted Tammany machine. He was not associated with the suspect metropolis. Though of distant Irish descent, he was "American" in looks and ways and associations. Here was a man who, simply because he possessed none of the peripheral handicaps of Smith, might have made a different kind of race. The religious issue would have been there but, stripped of other variables and standing alone, it could have been seen for what it was and

so judged. One is struck by the parallel with John F. Kennedy in a later day.

Could Walsh have carried the South? A Virginia judge told him he could have carried it by the largest margin in history. "But why then did they not support me at the convention?" Walsh asked.<sup>1</sup> There were some political circumstances in his favor. Anti-Smith Democrats, fearful of offending their huge Catholic constituency, could dump Smith for another Catholic without giving offense on religious grounds. His nomination would break up Smith's monopoly of the Catholic vote. It would give Southern Drys their opportunity, if sincere, to divorce the liquor issue from the religious.

Walsh was much abused by some Catholics because he contended against a Catholic. He asked simply to stand on his record. He insisted that none should vote for either of them because they were Catholics:

There may be other reasons why I ought not to get into the race, but I cannot admit for a moment that the fact that Governor Smith and I are both Catholics is any good reason, or any reason at all.<sup>2</sup>

A test of the religious issue without the constellation of other controversial variables surrounding the figure of Smith, would have been of great interest to the

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<sup>1</sup>Walsh papers, cited by Moore, p. 94.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 98.

political scientist. But Walsh had little of Smith's attractiveness, Smith's following, or Smith's record; and the case was not to be thus tested till 1960.

At Houston the anti-Smith forces were heard, but it was not religion, it was liquor that formed the visible issue. A Dry mass meeting at Richey's Tabernacle brought together representatives of "seven million churchwomen" who would block Al Smith if they could.<sup>1</sup> Catholicism was not mentioned at the meeting.

At Sam Houston Hall, the memories of 1924 were still fresh and there was an obvious emphasis upon party unity. George Olvany, leader of Tammany Hall since the death of Murphy, kept his delegation in check, even permitted other states to precede New York in the Smith demonstration.<sup>2</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt was again persuaded to make the nominating speech. More reluctant this time; what could he do that would not be anti-climactic after the "Happy Warrior"? He finally agreed on condition that Judge Proskauer would write it. Roosevelt read it too slowly, some thought, for the 15,000 in the Hall but it was just right on the radio, an omen of things to come.

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<sup>1</sup>Lewis S. Gannett, "It's All Al Amith," The Nation, Vol. CXXVII, no. 3287 (July 4, 1928), p. 8.

<sup>2</sup>Gannett, "The Big Show At Houston," The Nation, Vol. CXXVII, no. 3288 (July 11, 1928), p. 35.

We offer one who has the will to win. Who not only deserves success but demands it. Victory is his habit--the happy warrior, Alfred Smith.<sup>1</sup>

Two fundamentally different groups within the Democratic party came to Houston. They had met before to quarrel, but this time they were determined to make a show of agreement; and that, after a show of fight, they did. The leaders of Protestant Dry South and the bosses of Northern city machines chose Al Smith on the first ballot because the South had no leader to put forward, because the Catholics could not be forever denied a chance, because Smith's person was a platform in itself, and because Democrats North and South and West preferred a winner to a loser.

The vote was 849 2/3 on the first ballot. On the following day Senator Joseph T. Robinson of Arkansas was chosen as vice-presidential nominee by an almost unopposed 1,035 1/6 votes. His long fight for tolerance, climaxed at the convention, of which he was chairman, had won the favor of the Smith supporters.<sup>2</sup> He was a Dry, a Protestant and a Southerner. The ticket was balanced; and the South, ever loyal to the party, received its first such recognition since 1860.

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, June 28, 1928, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., June 30, 1928, p. 1.

*Let me briefly lay before you some of the high spots of that record. Reorganization of the government of the State. The greatest piece of constructive legislation that the State has known in fifty years, started by me as far back as 1920 and brought to successful accomplishment in 1927, after battling with the Republican party in and out of the Legislature for seven years.*

These were the golden years. Looking back over his career, his daughter says, he regarded the three great accomplishments of his life to have been: (1) the reorganization of state government; (2) the preservation of civil liberties; and (3) welfare legislation.<sup>1</sup> Most of the legislation for the accomplishment of these ends was carried out during the last two terms, usually with a hostile legislature.

The amendment to consolidate the departments--there were 187 separate government agencies<sup>2</sup>--was first passed in 1924, but by constitutional requirement, had to be passed again in 1925 and again by popular referendum. The several years required for this procedure demanded the continuity in office which Smith's three consecutive terms provided. Many of these boards and commissions possessed power to authorize expenditures. Few were responsible either to the legislature or to the executive branch. Though, in the Constitutional Convention of 1915, leading members of both parties had declared themselves for a new order. But purely political

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<sup>1</sup>Warner and Daniel, p. 140.

<sup>2</sup>The prepared manuscript says: "Eighty or more scattered boards, bureaus and commissions"; Mrs. Warner specifies 187 (Warner, p. 140), and Pringle 200 (Pringle, p. 284.)

considerations forbade its passage for years. The consolidation called for less than twenty departments, the heads of the most important of which became members of the governor's cabinet.<sup>1</sup>

Commenting on the Smith regime at Albany, Ellis, a New York State historian, gives glowing credit to the Governor's constructive legislation.

The history of New York's government during the postwar decade is in all essentials the story of Alfred E. Smith and the programs that he initiated and completed as governor. Although there was no area of state activity that was not influenced by his policies, his major accomplishments were the establishment of a system of centralized and responsible government, the adoption of a body of welfare legislation, that surpassed that of any other state, and the revitalization of the democratic spirit when democratic thought and practices appeared to have reached their nadir. His conduct of the government made New York a model for every other state in the Union and served as an outstanding example of the continuing strength of progressivism in an age of conservatism.<sup>2</sup>

*The executive budget, a modern, up-to-date method of handling the public finances, wrung from an unwilling Republican legislature by direct appeal to the people themselves, carrying to them the case of their business, and focusing on a hostile Legislature a strong fire of public criticism and public opinion.*

For many years the State funds had been appropriated by means of a document which originated in the Ways and Means

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<sup>1</sup>Pringle, p. 284.

<sup>2</sup>David M. Ellis et.al., A Short History of New York State (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1957), p. 393.

<sup>3</sup>Warner and Daniel, p. 175.

Committee and was written largely by its chairman.<sup>1</sup> Since all pork barrel items were included, it was, in its small sections, of interest to all, but as a whole, to none. It was passed by the Assembly, amended by the Senate, and understood by no one. The new budget placed the initiative and responsibility for the fiscal integrity of the State upon the Governor, with the Legislature retaining the right to amend. The Republicans complained that it made "a king of the Governor," but the people approved it by referendum.

*I think I can with great pride point to the longest line of constructive welfare legislation that any State in this union can boast of: The creation of boards of child welfare; statutes for the protection of women and children in industry; the workmen's compensation act, the most forwardlooking legislation of its kind adopted in any part of this country; a factory code that has been a marvel for every State in the union. This was all won by hard, earnest labor and endeavor. A large part of it was bitterly opposed and bitterly antagonized by the forces of reaction represented in the ranks of the Republican Legislature.*

Smith repeatedly emphasized his ability to accomplish constructive legislation over the protests of an opposition majority. Since, if elected in November, he would probably be working under a similar handicap in Washington, he did well to dwell on this accomplishment.

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<sup>1</sup>Warner and Daniel, p. 175.



It was the Triangle Waist Company fire in March, 1911, that awakened Smith to the conditions of labor and opened to him a career as a progressive in welfare legislation. One hundred forty-eight women and girls perished and the demands for reform of factory regulations moved the Legislature to the formation of a Factory Investigating Commission with Senator Wagner as chairman and Smith as vice-chairman.<sup>1</sup> The ensuing investigation revealed that the State possessed no machinery even to report the existence of its factories. The work of the committee drew Smith who had never traveled, to the ends of the State, where he learned the problems of every corner and became widely known for his work with factories. He no doubt gained as much from the Commission as the Commission from him.

Ellis, discussing the Smith legislative accomplishments, concludes with an observation regarding his welfare legislation:

Finally, in 1915, Wagner and Smith, although members of the minority party, were largely responsible for the legislature's enactment of the Widowed Mothers' Pension Bill. When Smith retired from the Assembly in 1915 to run for sheriff of New York County, he and Wagner had compiled a record that has never been surpassed in the history of the New York legislature.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Warner and Daniel, p. 66.

<sup>2</sup>Ellis, p. 393.

Opposition arose, too, in an area he might have anticipated. Controversies over public education brought attacks which he bitterly resented.

*One of the most insidious, the most stupid, the most deliberate and most willful of lies spread out in the propaganda is my attitude to the public school system. (Applause.)*

The prepared manuscript of the speech is brief and unemotional: it recommends writing to Frank Graves; it gives the comparative figures. The verbatim account, on the other hand, is extended and, one imagines, impassioned. The speaker is here treading the embattled ground of religious controversy, for the teaching and practice of the Catholic Church is in question. She has made broad claims and expended great energies in the field of education. Papal Canons have explicitly outlined Church policy and practice:

#### Canon 1374

Catholic children must not attend non-Catholic, neutral, or mixed schools, that is, such as are also open to non-Catholics.

#### Canon 1375

The Church has the right to create schools of all types, not only elementary ones but middle and higher schools as well.

#### Canon 1381

The religious instruction of children is, in all schools, subject to the inspection and authority of the Church. It is the right and duty of the bishop

to watch that in the schools of his territory nothing should be taught or nothing happen which is against faith and good morals.<sup>1</sup>

Their right, or the right of any church to maintain such a system has been upheld in the courts, providing only that certain standards be met. But there have been inevitable areas of suspicion and conflict:

1. the size of the Catholic school system in the geographical areas of great Catholic concentration.
2. the supposed boycott of the public schools by Catholics, sometimes approaching real conflict between the two systems.
3. the suspicion that religious intolerance is incalculated in parochial classrooms.
4. the growing demand on the part of Catholics that the State share in the support of their sectarian schools.

New York's possession of parallel school systems brought tension and debate; but it was the "insidious," the "stupid," and the "willful" attacks which Smith resented. Some of the vicious anti-Catholic literature preserved among his Papers attacks Catholic education.

I'll take down the flag from the public schools  
And put up the cross for the ignorant fools;  
The Bible in the schools shall not be read  
But instead we'll say masses for the dead.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Codex Iuris Canonici, cited by Paul Blanshard, Communism, Democracy, and Catholic Power (Boston: Beacon Press, 1951), p. 324.

<sup>2</sup>Anonymous brochure, Smith Papers, Albany.

A cartoon published by the infamous Fellowship Forum was entitled, "This Is What Al Smith Would Do To Our Public School System." It depicted a Catholic classroom. On the teacher's desk are books, marked, "Propaganda" and "History (as Revised by the Pope)"; a globe in the corner shows Rome as **the** "Capital of the world"; on the wall, a cartoon picture of the Pope has been hung over one of George Washington and **is** inscribed, "His Holiness, the POPE, Father of our Country and Ruler of the World." The priest at the blackboard has written "America for Americans," but the last word, crossed out, has been replaced by the word, "Catholics."<sup>1</sup>

More to the point, yet still an offense to Smith, was an anonymous card entitled, "Nailed Facts! Ten Reasons Why Al Smith Should Not Be Elected." It claimed to quote only Catholic sources and was distributed after the famous "Reply to Marshall," for it offers "a few statements of eminent Roman Catholics for Father Duffy to try to help Alfred E. Smith avoid answering." Eight of the ten quotations were on the subject of education:

First--The Public schools: "An imperfect and vicious system of education which undermines the religion of youth." Cardinal Gibbons.

Second--"We must take part in the elections, move in a solid mass in every state against the party pledged to sustain the integrity of the public schools."

Cardinal McClosky.

Third--"I would as soon administer sacrament to a dog as to Catholics who send their children to public schools." Father Walker.

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<sup>1</sup>Reprinted from The Fellowship Forum, (Washington, D. C.: n.p., n.d.).

Fourth--"The public schools have produced nothing but a Godless generation of thieves and blackguards."  
Father Schauer.

Fifth--"It will be a glorious day in this country when under the laws, the school system will be shivered to pieces." The Catholic Telegraph.

Sixth--"The common schools of this country are sinks of moral pollution and nurseries of hell."  
The Chicago Tablet.

Seventh--"Education must be controlled by Catholic authorities even to war and bloodshed."  
The Catholic World.

Eighth--"Education outside the Catholic church is a damnable heresy."  
Pope Pius IX.<sup>1</sup>

Al Smith was himself a product of the parochial school system, attending the St. James Parish School on New Bowery Street under the care of the Christian Brothers. An inscription at the entry and a large picture in the hall proclaims to today's visitor that St. James School has not forgotten its most illustrious alumnus.<sup>2</sup>

Though Smith spent not a single day in the public schools, if he was ever guilty of neglecting them his enemies failed to find the record, and no such accusation was ever successfully lodged against him. His interest in education was stimulated by the curtailment of his own. In his annual message of 1923, he asserted that "anyone desiring to have a proper understanding of the necessity for an education, need only talk to the man who was denied

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<sup>1</sup>Anonymous card, "Nailed Facts!," Smith Papers, Albany.

<sup>2</sup>Visit to St. James School, Manhattan, June 23, 1965.

it,"<sup>1</sup> and on the same occasion he insisted upon the state's duty to provide to all children the same educational opportunities.

The Oklahoma City remarks on education are not a paean of praise for the public schools; they recognize and accept a responsibility to fulfill "the constitutional mandate of our State that there must be provided a system of free public schools for the education of our children." This, without question, he did.

*The present Commissioner of Education in the State of New York is a man by the name of Frank P. Graves. He is a Republican. Let anybody in Oklahoma, or any other part of the United States write a letter to Frank P. Graves, care of the Department of Education in Albany, and ask him the single question: What Governor of New York has been the best friend of public education during your stewardship? (Applause.) And I suggest to you that when you receive a reply, you will find in it my name. (Applause.)*

*Well, sometimes figures speak probably louder than words. Let me give you some figures, because, remember, after all, in education, like everything else, you get the degree of it that you pay for. Education must be purchased. You don't get any more than you pay for, and it is your business to see that you don't get any less. So let's see how it figures up.*

*In 1919, the first year of my governorship, the appropriation for the Department of Education was eleven and a half million dollars.*

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<sup>1</sup>Cited by Ellis, pp. 402-403.

*In 1928, this year, it was \$86,000,000 (applause), a difference of \$74,500,000.*

*Now, there is no doubt about this statement. This is a positive public record in Albany and I could not dare make it here with the Republican National Committee listening in (laughter), putting it down on paper word for word, looking for something to pick on, looking for something to dispute, looking for an opportunity to challenge something that Smith said in Oklahoma--I could not state it unless it is absolutely right. It is according to the record. (Applause.)*

*Not only did I sustain it and the department in appropriation, but every forward looking measure, everything that strengthened the system, everything that helped the constitutional mandate of our State that there must be provided a system of free public schools for the education of our children, I fostered, urged and helped to the very last degree. (Applause.)*

The New York Times applauded his efforts as early as 1924, stating, "The public schools have had no better friend at Albany than Alfred E. Smith."<sup>1</sup>

Among the Smith mementos held by the Museum of the City of New York are two which attest to Governor Smith's diligence on behalf of the schools of the State. An honorary degree of Doctor of Laws, conferred by the University of the State of New York, bears a citation which reads in part:

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, October 3, 1924, p. 20.

The University of the State of New York . . . as the corporate body in control of public education for the past century and a half, wishes especially to emphasize your constant support and encouragement of the state school system and your consistent efforts to afford equal educational opportunities to every boy and girl in the state . . . . You will be remembered as the devoted friend of our public schools and the benefactor of untold generations of children.<sup>1</sup>

The New York Academy of Public Education presented him with its award for distinguished service to public education.<sup>2</sup>

Such contemporary recognition has been seconded by the more recent praise of Ellis, who, after recounting the story of increased educational appropriations and administrative reforms of the school system, concludes that, though "a product of a Catholic Church school in the lower East Side of Manhattan, Smith did as much for upstate public schools as did any governor in the history of the State."<sup>3</sup>

*Public health: Ask the doctors of New York State. Don't ask me about it. Write to any doctor. Take any physician you like. I do not care whether is is a Democrat or Republican or a Socialist. Write him a letter and ask him what he thinks my attitude has been toward the question of promoting the public health of the State of New York.*

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<sup>1</sup>University of the State of N. Y., presentation by Re gent William J. Wallin, October 12, 1933, now in the Museum of the City of New York.

<sup>2</sup>Museum of the City of New York.

<sup>3</sup>Ellis, p. 403.



*Ask him what degree of intelligence I brought to the reorganization of the Health Department, what degree of intelligence I brought to the rewriting of the medical code, and you will get the answer again. If they tell the truth they cannot escape it.*

*By my bond issue, that I debated with Republican leaders all over the State, I put the State in a position to catch up after twenty solid years of Republican neglect in the care of our institutions, our prisons, and our charity endeavors.*

Only once had his concern for the health of his constituents been seriously challenged--by Hearst. Smith had sought a reduction in milk prices and had requested from the Legislature enactments to that end. But that body, evidently unwilling to offend the dairy interests, failed to act. The Hearst papers chose to blame the Governor, suggesting that he was in the pay of the dairies, that he had power to fix milk prices if he chose, and that he once kept food adulterers from jail.<sup>1</sup> He was cartooned and vilified in the Journal.

Smith's response was "but a step away from the unprintable." He denounced Hearst's "foul and dirty pen," his "slimy ink." Though he challenged Hearst to formal debate, naming the night of October 29 at Carnegie Hall, Hearst did not appear. Smith stepped alone onto the platform, angry and hurt. "He has never appeared to better advantage,"

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<sup>1</sup>The best brief description of the "Milk debate" is found in Pringle, pp. 25-32, from which the present discussion is largely drawn.

says Pringle. This was no carefully edited manuscript; the speech was extemporaneous, powerful, full of angry and twisted syntax:

Al Smith's face is always reddish. In the heat of a vehement address it becomes crimson. He does not perspire. He sweats. Increasingly, as the years of his experience have accumulated, his poise and dignity have increased. At the average public hearing over which he presides at Albany he is all that could be desired of a Governor, even by the most correct of critics. But during an important address, for all that his tailoring is immaculate, there is about him just a trace of his trucking days. He knows nothing of public speaking as a fine art, of the nuances of phrasing. He has one or two simple gestures; a fist crashing on the stand in front of him, a finger pointed in accusation. His voice, with its nasal twang of the East Side, bellows and roars and cracks and penetrates to the last row of seats. He is discordant, often awkward, lacking in versatility. And he is tremendously effective.<sup>1</sup>

The speech consisted of three parts: (1) an angry denunciation of Hearst; (2) a point-by-point rebuttal of the accusations; (3) a reasoned outlined of the milk problem and his proposed solution. "The man that preaches to the poor of this or any other community discontent and dissatisfaction to help himself and to destroy, as he said he would, the Governor of the State, is a man as low and as mean as I can picture him." "I defy him or his lawyers to challenge that cold, straightforward statement of mine that no power exists in my hands or in the hands of any other agency of this government to fix the price at which anybody can sell

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<sup>1</sup>Pringle, pp. 28-29.

anything in this State, whether it is milk or shoes or houses or anything else." "Nobody that ever went up to the Governor's office went there with a graver sense of the responsibility of that office than I did."<sup>1</sup>

The audience response was a unanimously voted resolution of censure upon Hearst. And except for a momentary revival in the 1926 campaign, the milk controversy was laid to rest.

His record in matters of public health appears to be as good as his claims. In 1923, just two weeks after his return to office, a fire in the Manhattan State Hospital destroyed much property and took twenty-five lives. Smith seized upon the occasion to promote a fifty million dollar bond issue for hospital construction.<sup>2</sup> He undertook also the improvement of the care of mental defectives.

He further proposed public health facilities for infants and mothers at state expense, subsidizing physicians to practice in rural areas, and state-sponsored health and maternity insurance. He obtained laws fixing the maximum hours of labor for women and children "not as a favor" but "in the interest of the state itself" as a measure in "preservation of public health."<sup>3</sup> In 1924 for the first

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, October 30, 1928, p.3.

<sup>2</sup>Handlin, p. 106.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 107.

time, the state granted money for public health units; in 1925, public health nursing was subsidized; in 1926, aid was granted for the construction of county hospitals.

The public health record would bear scrutiny.

*I organized and originated the first comprehensive State-wide system of parks and parkways that the State of New York ever had, and I planned them and conceived them, not only for the generation today but for the years to come. And all of that against the stubborn opposition of a senseless and stupid Republican majority in both houses of the Legislature that conceived the childish notion that the way to get rid of me was not to do the things that I was asking for. (Applause.)*

*But they failed to take it to account that my proposals had behind them the force of public opinion, the power of public demand and the thought of the intelligent, thinking citizens of the State.*

There is evidence in the Smith autobiography that the care and extension of the parks was as near to his heart as any of his administrative accomplishments:

*I feel fully compensated for all the work and anxiety when I see breathing spaces in beautifully wooded countryside and on lakes and beaches for the women and children to day, and for countless generations to come.<sup>1</sup>*

When he assumed office in 1919, thirty-five different boards and commissions were responsible for the various parks and historic sites in the State. In 1923, he

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, Up To Now, p. 330.

began the development of a state park system and obtained approval of a \$15,000,000 bond issue for its support.<sup>1</sup> The size of recreational areas was greatly increased and their administration placed on a non-political basis. As early as 1924 he was able to boast of the State's parks to the convention at Madison Square Garden.<sup>2</sup>

The Republican opposition to which he makes reference centered upon the acquisition of 1,600 acres of beach property on Long Island. Smith declared that it was motivated by real estate interests desirous of acquiring the property for private use. He was determined that the State should have it, and litigation continued until 1929, the Governor himself appearing in court on behalf of the State.<sup>3</sup> Other park projects were not so strongly opposed, but this one was in the courts at the time of the Oklahoma City speech and his concern may be understood in that light.

*Water Power: For ten solid years I have stood with my back against the wall in the face of all kinds of pressure for the preservation of the great natural water power resources of the State for the people to enjoy. (Applause.) While it is true that I was unable, at the hands of a hostile Legislature held body and soul, boots and breeches by the power of the trust, to be able to*

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<sup>1</sup>Pringle, p. 261.

<sup>2</sup>New York Times, July 11, 1924, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup>Handlin, p. 100.

*put over my plan, I nevertheless stopped them from giving the water powers of the State over to private corporations for private profit and for private gain. (Applause.)*

The Governor considered water power to be a major campaign issue at the national level. In the Address of Acceptance, he had spoken strongly in defense of public ownership:

These sources of water power must remain forever under public ownership and control. Where they are owned by the Federal Government, they should remain under Federal control. Where they are owned by an individual State, they should be under the control of that State, or where they are owned by States jointly, they should be under the control of those States.<sup>1</sup>

He would contract with private companies to distribute power, retaining public ownership of sites and plants.

A major campaign speech at Denver was devoted to the subject. He recounted the history of New York's long struggle over power rights, admitting that he had not been able to develop these resources because the ten-year battle was not yet ended, but the present State ownership was testimony that he had not lost the war.<sup>2</sup>

The Smith accomplishment, then, was that he had kept public resources from falling into private hands upon terms disadvantageous to the people's interests. He could blame

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<sup>1</sup>Campaign Addresses, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 63.

the Republican Legislature that the resources were as yet largely undeveloped.

*I undertook and accomplished ballot reform, the enactment of a direct primary law and a corrupt practices act, and I signed the bill that gave a bonus from the State of New York to the soldiers that left the State to fight for their country.*

*Agriculture: Nothing makes me smile as much as to once and a while have a fellow say, "What does Smith know about agriculture; he comes from the city; he would not know a farm if he saw one." (Laughter.) What a joke, what a travesty; the agricultural interests of the State of New York know I understand their problems, and in my Omaha speech of Tuesday night I think I pretty clearly indicated that I understand the agricultural problem of the West. (Applause.)*

*I have cooperated with them to the last degree, gave them their cooperative marketing associations, the construction of roads, and highways leading to the markets, State subsidy, recommended by me as far back as 1920 for the improvement of roads to bring the farms closer to the centres of consumption.*

He had once been less confident of his grasp of farm matters. Will Rogers said of him, "Al is honest about farm relief. He says he doesn't know a cornstalk from a jimson weed and that a tractor might be a mouthwash so far as he is concerned."<sup>1</sup> Cartoonists had a field day with the "Tammany farmer," and even his very sympathetic biographer,

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, September 13, 1928, p. 4.

Edmund Moore, felt that Smith had not fully studied the problem.<sup>1</sup> The New York Times, under the subtitle, "Ignorant of Farm Relief," quoted Smith as saying before the Albany Chamber of Commerce the previous year, "I can't think of any way of really helping the farmers. If they could bring me a good suggestion I should be glad to adopt it. The fact is, they are the only ones who can save themselves."<sup>2</sup>

At Ohama, two days before the Oklahoma City speech, he had devoted his first major campaign speech to the farm problem. It had been very favorably received; cheering Democrats and frightening Republicans. When critics disparaged the Oklahoma City speech most strongly, they did so by contrasting it with the one at Omaha.

Preparation for the farm speech had been thorough. He read much and received a delegation of farm leaders from the Midwest, with whom he threshed out a policy stand.<sup>3</sup> The speech was composed of two parts: an attack upon the do-nothing Republican administration for its handling of the problem, and his own proposals framed as answers to the newspaper questions.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Moore, p. 119.

<sup>2</sup>New York Times, September 18, 1928, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup>Smith, Up To Now, p. 393.

<sup>4</sup>This summary of the Omaha speech is based upon the text in Campaign Addresses, pp. 27-42.



The Republicans, he said, have acknowledged in their platforms of 1924 and 1928 the existence of distress in the agricultural industry. This depression is the responsibility of that party because they have been in power during the seven and one-half years of its growth. They have not taken any measures to relieve it, and they have opposed those presented by the Democrats. He presented statistics of depression: increase of farm debt, decrease of farm property value, bank failures in agricultural areas, and the decline of the farmers' purchasing power.

The fundamental problem, he said, was that the farmer buys in a protected market and sells in an unprotected market. But the imposition of tariffs alone would not solve the problem in the case of crops of which there was an exportable surplus. There must be a mechanism for control of the surplus with the cost of that control imposed on the crop benefited.

Revealing himself as an expert in administration, not a specialist in agriculture, he proposed the creation of an Agricultural Commission which would supply to the new administration in the spring suggestions worked out during the winter. He later proposed to name as a member of that Commission the Republican governor of Nebraska, who had criticized his Omaha speech.

He also proposed stabilization corporations and aid to cooperatives, though these must not be voluntary as the Republicans would have them. He favored the McNary-Haugen Bill in principle, but not in its mechanics. Then he turned to the questions propounded in an open letter which faced him upon his arrival in Omaha. Only two dealt with farm problems:

No. 1. "What specific Federal legislation do you propose for farm relief?" He proposed the Agricultural Commission described earlier in the speech.

No. 8. "Are you in favor of higher food prices in the city or lower food prices on the farm?" "My answer to that," he said, "is that the farmer can get the full benefit of the value of his crop without increasing the price in the city."

In his Address of Acceptance, he had sought to harmonize his desire to aid agriculture with his reticence to interfere with free enterprise by pointing out that agriculture is a "public function," vital to all. Further, if the government has interfered in the national economy by tariffs, by aid to the merchant marine, and by control of the flow of money, it could be no worse to aid agriculture, and if successful, no interference would be more readily forgiven.

The Tammany Cat was not yet a farmer, but he was learning.

*It is a matter of fact, and is known throughout the State of New York, that although it took me five or six years to do it, I placed the business of the State of New York and the Government of the State of New York on a strictly business basis.*

*I saw to it that appointments and promotions in the public service were made for merit and for fitness. I moved men up in the departments from subordinate positions to the high places. My own secretary, my personal confidential secretary, was thirty years employed in the Executive Department. I moved him up and made him Secretary to the Governor as a reward for his faithfulness and devoted service to the State and, further, because he was the best man that I could find for it. (Applause.)*

This trusted aid was George B. Graves, a prime example of Smith's independence during the latter years at Albany. Not only had Graves served under 14 other Governors of the State, but he was a Republican, a Protestant, and a 32nd degree Mason. Appointments such as this were not designed to please Tammany Hall. It was the irony of Smith's political posture during these years that his appointments should alienate both Tammany and the Protestant bigots, apparently pleasing no one but the voters.

*You hear them talking about the cost of government under Smith. Well, the Republican Press Bureau of the State Committee is the busiest lie foundry that this country ever produced. (Laughter and applause.) They can turn them out there as fast as an electrically-controlled neostyle can print the copy. And all summed*

*up it is about as complete a shower of bunk as was ever poured out upon an intelligent people. (Applause.) The fact of the matter is that with all of the public works in construction in the State of New York we have reduced taxes to the two classes of people who feel them the most--the small home owner and the farmer. (Applause.) Not only that, but by moving up the brackets in the income tax we relieved 200,000 income tax payers of any further obligation to the State of New York for its support directly from their incomes.*

The vastly increased services undertaken by the State on behalf of education, welfare, parks and State institutions necessitated a vastly increased State income. Ellis says of the Governor's administration that "one of Smith's principal tasks was to persuade the taxpayers to accept higher taxes."<sup>1</sup> Previous administrations, usually Republican, had made political capital of their frugality. Smith believed that people were willing to spend money for good government and for the things it could provide, demanding only that full account be given and that they receive their money's worth. It was his detailed explanations to the voters that had obtained the increased revenues his projects required. He convinced the electorate that taxes should be judged by the services they purchased. In his autobiography he philosophized on the subject of the citizen and his money:

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<sup>1</sup>Ellis, p. 405.

It is a mistake to think that the people approve of reduced appropriations when in the process of reducing them the state or any of its activities are to suffer. What the people want is an honest accounting for every dollar appropriated. They want every dollar of public money to bring a dollar's worth of service to the state. They have no patience with waste and there is a great difference between large appropriations and waste.<sup>1</sup>

He was able, however, to reduce the property tax as a part of the general reorganization of the State's revenue program. By 1928 it was only one-half mill per dollar of assessed valuation.<sup>2</sup> Other sources were expanded, principally the mortgage tax, the motor vehicles tax, and corporation taxes. An income tax, inaugurated during his first year in office, ultimately become the State's chief source of revenue.<sup>3</sup> Through the years, the burden of this tax was shifted somewhat toward the higher income groups.

When large capital outlays were required for the construction of parks and buildings, he resorted to bond issues, arguing that they were the most equitable means of distributing the cost. Since these were approved by referenda, he took his appeals directly to the voters, who almost uniformly supported him against a Republican legislature committed to pay-as-you-go finance.

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, Up To Now, p. 352.

<sup>2</sup>Ellis, p. 405.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

*As I said before, all of this was accomplished in spite of a hostile legislature, seeking every political advantage that they could--and how? By direct appeal to the people, by the plain, ordinary, homely, every-day method of coming out and talking about it and being on the level. And, incidentally this country needs some of that kind of talk. (Loud applause. A voice: "Tell it to them in Oklahoma. Straighten as out, Al.")*

*During the eight years of my Governorship I appointed more people to office requiring the consent of the Senate than President Coolidge appointed. I read in the paper that some of his appointments were rejected by a Senate of his own party. During my eight years the Senate of the State of New York was in control of my party only two out of the eight, and not a single appointment, not a single appointment that I ever made, had to be either withdrawn or was rejected by the Senate (Loud applause.) Now if the Republican National Committee is listening in, let them check that up. (Loud applause.)*

*I picked up the paper one day and I saw a headline: "Congress Passes Four Bills Over the Veto of the President." Congress was in control of the President's own party.*

*The Legislature as a whole was against me politically during the whole eight years I was governor and in that eight years, believe me, I vetoed some thousands of bills and not a single bill that I vetoed was ever passed over my veto by the Republican Legislature. (Applause.)*

*If you have a memorandum of the appointments, put that with it. (Applause.)*

Smith's relations with the New York legislature were often abrasive. Because in all his career as governor, only one two-year term provided him with a Democratic legislature,

and then only in the upper house. The Republicans, having held the governorship during nineteen of the preceding twenty-three years, naturally viewed Smith's first election as something of an accident. Their policy was to mark time until they should be restored to executive power in 1921. Smith, therefore, resorted to a variety of measures to accomplish his program in spite of this handicap. He enlisted liberal Republican support in the legislature. He made many appointments from among the Republican ranks. He cooperated closely with non-partisan citizen groups. He went directly to the people through speaking tours and by recourse to the referendum.

He used his first term to prepare for the future. His bi-partisan Reconstruction Commission drew up the blueprint for reforms which were carried out during the last three terms of his governorship. In 1925, when the work of the Commission was endangered by partisan opposition, Smith appointed Republican senior statesman Charles Evans Hughes as its chairman. So effective were these tactics that

When the long and tortuous struggle for reorganization was finally finished, it was Smith who deserved the major share of the credit. He had appointed the Reconstruction Commission; he had used every conceivable opportunity to explain the amendemnts to the voters; and he had pushed, cajoled, and outmaneuvered the legislature.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 401.

He came to feel that partisan obstruction was his greatest ally, for, whenever one of his proposals was rejected by the legislature, he had an issue, and, going straight to the voters, he sounded the refrain, "Let's look at the record." The record was his list of proposals and the Republican opposition to them. "If the Republicans had not used partisan obstructive tactics against me, I should have been in private life long ago," he said.<sup>1</sup> He won every gubernatorial election campaigning against the record of the legislature.

*Now, let me say something to you. Up in the State of New York we have some pretty keen gentlemen in the Republican Party. (Laughter.) They are pretty smart, and they are pretty clever. Some of them have brains, some of them have money and can hire brains. (Laughter.) And if there was anything wrong with my Administration, Senator Owen would not have to talk about it. (Laughter.)*

*Now bear this in mind. One scandal in my administration would save the Republican National Committee all the money that I believe they are using to spread through the mails this scurrilous propaganda. Tonight, while we are sitting in this auditorium, there are in force and effect in the State of New York contracts for public work to the extent of \$62,000,000.*

*In 1926 the Controller of the State was a Republican. My adversary in that campaign was a man of great wealth. He had accountants and statisticians, and stenographers and what not, with neostyles and photostats. (Laughter.)*

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 398.



*They were up there for three months and they copied the record, and they went over every voucher and accounted for every five-cent piece of the millions of dollars that passed through the Controller's office--\$242,000,000 this year. At the end of it all, what was there?*

*He couldn't find anything. He couldn't find it because it's not there. (Loud applause.)*

*Now, I've put into the business of the State of New York a great deal of hard, conscientious labor. And that record--if I'm to be judged at all--it is from that record that I should be judged.*

*And here in the State of Oklahoma I challenge Owen, anybody connected with him, any person that he can bring to his assistance, to come to Albany and go over that and point to anything that he can find that isn't all right. (Applause.)*

Tammany Hall did not habitually invite inspection of its bookkeeping, but its most illustrious graduate was able to say, "Let's look at the record," and make it his rallying cry. Once the record was examined, few accusations were ever brought, and none had a chance of survival. It was doubtless in the face of this lack of evidence against Smith's own integrity that the more general charge of Tammany taint was brought by Owen. This was guilt by association, and Smith gave it a double response. (1) Earlier he had claimed that the charge was a "red herring" to cover religious bigotry. (2) Now, however, he tacitly admitted the truth of the charges against Tammany and defended his own integrity apart from the Hall and sought a separate

judgment. Further, he did so without offense to Tammany and without departing from his unvarying loyalty to it.

His opponents, finding him incorruptible, had, in fact, often borne grudging testimony to his integrity and his capacity. These character witnesses he was about to marshal in his defense.

*Now do not lose sight of the fact that New York is by no means a Democratic State. There have been only two Democratic candidates for the Presidency who have carried the State since the Civil War. One of them was Grover Cleveland, and the other was Woodrow Wilson. (Applause.)*

*Now, I think it might be interesting to think of what some of the people in New York say about this. I do not have to call any character witnesses for my Administration. I can state it myself (Laughter), but as a matter of interest it is well to let us hear from some of them.*

The persons cited were selected for their lack of bias in Smith's favor, for they were Republicans or non-political persons owing him no debts. It might have been more impressive to his Oklahoma audience to hear some testimonials from other than New Yorkers and Easterners, for his popularity in his home state was not in question. In this he suffered as he did throughout the campaign from the fact of his not being a truly national figure. Some presidential aspirants have moved from their governorships to the United States Senate in the hope that participation in nationl

politics would provide a needed national image. The Oklahoma City speech, relying strongly upon the Governor's New York record, revealed him as a local figure still.

This section was longer in the prepared script than in the speech as delivered. It may have been reduced because of the shortage of time, or it may be that the modesty to which he made humorous allusion was, in part at least, real. The source of these glowing testimonies was the campaign workers' manual,<sup>1</sup> available for the use of stump speakers who could make use of them in his behalf with no sacrifice of modesty:

*Charles E. Hughes, candidate for President on the Republican ticket in 1916, Secretary of State in the Harding Cabinet, former Justice of the United States Supreme Court, former Governor of the State of New York--here is what he says about it, speaking of me:*

*"One who represents to us the expert in Government and I might say a master in the science of politics. The title that he holds is the proudest title that any American can hold, because it is a title to the esteem and affection of his fellow citizens."*

*Let us see what Nicholas Murray Butler, President of the Columbia University and a prominent Republican, said, speaking about me when I had conferred upon me by that University the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws, he said: "He is alert, effective, public-spirited and courageous, constantly speaking the true voice of the people."*

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<sup>1</sup>The Campaign Book of the Democratic Party, 1928 (Washington, D. C.: The Democratic National Committee, 1928).

*The Rev. Howard C. Robbins, Dean of the Episcopal Cathedral of St. John the Divine, said:*

*"He is a man singularly well balanced, capable and forceful. He has been independent and fearless. He has had the interests of all of the people of the State at heart and his sincerity and courage have won for him a nation-wide recognition."*

The three witnesses who survive the reduction of this section of the speech are well-chosen, not only for their personal distinction, but also because they are a well-balanced representation of government, education, and the Protestant Church. Besides these, three others appeared in the original manuscript of the speech. A Democrat, Robert Lansing, Secretary of State under President Wilson, was quoted:

His public career is convincing proof that he possesses the true spirit of public service, and is eminently fitted to fill with distinction and ability any office for which he might be chosen candidate.<sup>1</sup>

Virginia G. Gildersleeve, Dean of Barnard College, stated that Smith had "made an excellent Governor and shown a knowledge of State affairs which very few of our Governors have ever possessed."

It is significant that one who had not received the benefits of higher education should value the approval of educators. In the prepared manuscript he cites, finally,

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, Prepared manuscript, Oklahoma City Speech, Appendix A.

a "group of distinguished educators, headed by Prof. John Dewey of Columbia University": "His whole attitude on education has been one of foresight and progress."

*Now listen, I could go on indefinitely with that. There is no end to the amount of testimonials along that line that I could produce. But what's the use? I only do it for the purpose of putting this question to your mind: Who knows: these distinguished citizens of New York or Senator Owen? (Laughter and applause. A Voice: "Keep right on.")*

It seems a paradox that, while his strongest defense was based upon his record, Smith should remain so vulnerable to attack upon his record. There are, in fact, two "records"; and while he proudly recited the story of administrative reform, civic improvement, and liberal welfare legislation, his attackers were ringing the changes upon his votes and vetoes on the "moral issues," a subject which he never raised and attempted only in part to refute.

This record was drawn from the minutes of the Assembly and the statehouse, and dealt with issues that were deemed vital by the churches: liquor control, gambling, and the regulation of prostitution. A tabulated extract of this record was widely distributed and came into the hands of all opposition groups in only slightly varying forms. The version used in this study is that prepared by the Fellowship Forum.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>"The Political Record of Al Smith," The Fellowship Forum, unpagcd.

In this "record," the Smith votes and vetoes on the liquor issue in its various phases occupied the largest place. Before Prohibition, various referenda had been proposed which would have granted local option to the citizens of the State at various levels. All were opposed by Smith:

- 1907--April 3, Voted to keep local option bill strangled in Excise Committee.
- 1910--April 26, Voted against amending Raines Law so as to allow local option in cities.
- 1911--May 24, Voted against local option bill for cities.  
--July 19, Voted against Gray local option bill.
- 1912--Voted against Lincoln bill to grant local option to third-class cities.
- 1913--Appointed eight Tammany men out of thirteen on Assembly Excise Committee and refused to give representatives of the people a chance to vote on any temperance legislation.
- 1914--March 19, Voted against Gillett bills to grant local option to cities, city sub-divisions and counties.
- 1915--March 31, Voted against Fish bill for referendum on state-wide prohibition.  
--April 7, Voted against Preswick bill to grant local option to university city of Ithaca.  
--April 20, Voted to kill Howard bill granting local option to cities, city sub-divisions and counties.

His vote on the referenda was doubly important because he had favored referenda in other legislative areas, and later, during Prohibition, favored its use as a means of opening local areas to the liquor trade.

On bills for opening liquor establishments on Sunday:

- 1907--March 26 and April 23, Voted for opening up prohibition areas to sale of liquor.
- 1911--May 24, Voted for Walker bill increasing hours for sale of liquors.

1913--As speaker helped desperate effort all through session to pass bill legalizing the opening of saloons on Sunday in New York City. Engineered passage of Walker bill increasing hours of sale of liquors.

On bills that concerned the proximity of saloons to schools:

1908--Voted for bill to remove all zone provisions protecting churches and schools from saloons.  
 1909--Introduced and pushed bill to permit hotel bars within church and school zones.  
 1911--Voted for Sullivan bill opening up prohibited zones about churches and schools to hotel bars.  
 1913--As Speaker engineered passage of bill permitting saloons within 200 feet of private schools.

On gambling, his vote had been cast as follows:

1904--April 6, Voted against the bill adding strength to enforcement features of law against gambling.  
 1908--Fought Governor Hughes' Anti-Race-Track Gambling Bill through two legislative sessions, "to his lasting dishonor," the Citizens' Union said.  
 1910--May 27, Voted against Perkins bill relating to gambling and betting establishments.

The charge that he had defended prostitution arose from his voting against a bill that would have placed its control more closely in the hands of the police. Though Smith asserted that this legislation would only encourage police corruption, his opponents used the occasion to paint him as the protector of vice.

In the discussion of his voting record on moral issues, the most articulate voice to be raised against him was that of Dr. John Roach Straton, pastor of Calvary

Baptist Church in New York City. A leading Fundamentalist, and originally a Virginian, he had been called to New York as pastor of Calvary Baptist Church. According to a New York Herald Tribune feature article, he was opposed to much of what he found in the metropolis, including "card playing, cocktail drinking, poodle dogs, divorce, novels, stuffy rooms, dancing, evolution, Clarence Darrow, overeating, nude art, prize-fighting, actors, greyhound racing and modernism."<sup>1</sup> Dr. Straton's name had already reached the public prints earlier in the year concerning a suit against C. L. Smith, President of the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism.<sup>2</sup> But his chief renown was to come from his challenge to Governor Smith's candidacy.

Straton seems to have taken up the charges first made by William Allen White, and which he had at least partially retracted. These concerned the Smith voting record as a young Assemblyman: on gambling, liquor control, and prostitution.<sup>3</sup> Something of the nature of Straton's preaching may be seen in the title of his Sunday evening sermon, August 5, 1928: "The Moral and Religious Stakes in the Present Political Situation--A Frank Discussion of the Dangers of Electing as President of the United States Any

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<sup>1</sup>New York Herald Tribune, August 12, 1928, cited by Moore, p. 136.

<sup>2</sup>New York Times, April 12, 1928, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup>Moore, p. 136.



Man Who Advocates the Nullification of Righteous Law, and Whose Election Would Inevitably Give Aid and Comfort to the Forces of Lawlessness, Immorality, Vice and Crime in America."<sup>1</sup>

Smith might have done well to ignore Straton, but he was now in a political campaign. He wrote a letter, demanding an opportunity to answer him in the place where the charges had been made, Calvary Baptist Church.<sup>2</sup> Straton agreed and asked for equal time in St. Patrick's Cathedral. When the church board at Calvary refused permission, Straton suggested Madison Square Garden, but Smith insisted on the church. The wrangling was widely reported in the New York press; Smith gaining nothing from it, the church board displeased by it, the Pastor evidently enjoying his front page notices.<sup>3</sup> The publicity led to invitations to speak in out-of-state churches, mostly in the South, which he promptly accepted. When Smith's campaign itinerary was announced, Straton observed that his proposed speaking tour would coincide with the Governor's at Oklahoma City. When he challenged Smith to meet him there,<sup>4</sup> Smith responded that he would be pleased to do so.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, August 6, 1928, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., August 9, 1928, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., August 15, 1928, p. 20.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., September 11, 1928, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., September 12, 1928, p. 1.

Meanwhile in Oklahoma City, the Reverend Mordecai Ham, who had issued the invitation to Straton, had arranged for the use of the Stockyards Coliseum for the night following the Governor's appearance. Straton then challenged Smith to "divide the time." In a story date-lined New York, the Daily Oklahoman reported:

The Reverend Dr. John Roach Straton, in an open letter read from his pulpit at Calvary Baptist Church Sunday night, challenged Gov. Alfred E. Smith to meet him on September 20 at Oklahoma City for a "joint discussion" of the Governor's public record. . . .

"I have been invited by a group of anti-Smith Democrats and anti-liquor friends to speak in Oklahoma City on September 21," the letter which was addressed to the Governor, said.

"If you will divide your time with me on September 20, I will gladly divide my time with you on September 21."<sup>1</sup>

When the Governor declined to share his evening, Straton and Ham were reduced to the role of spectators. At first there was some difficulty in obtaining seats for they were recognized by those in charge, but eventually they were given places on the platform among three hundred honored guests. Smith, aware of their presence, turned frequently to face them at significant moments in his address. Though Straton had threatened to interrupt if he were attacked, he remained silent and left quietly at the close. Interviewed at his quarters later that night, he termed the Smith

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<sup>1</sup>Daily Oklahoman, September 17, 1928, p. 1.

speech "a joke." "He laid himself wide open," the Oklahoman reported him as saying of Smith:

It was a good Tammany talk, but as a message coming from a candidate for president of the United States, it was a joke.

We never have raised the religious issue against him. The real issues of the campaign are moral questions, and after hearing Governor Smith tonight I know why he wanted to speak in my church, he wanted to get in there and play on the sympathies of his audience by making the kind of religious speech he made here. . . .

I shall say nothing against his religion nor shall I assail him personally, but I shall show very clearly why it is that the politicians can't hold the people in line for Tammany, and why the solid south is going to be split wide open in November.<sup>1</sup>

On the morning after the speech, Straton sent the following telegram to the Smith train:

In view of your complete avoidance of your real record in your speech last night, which I heard sitting within a few feet of you, I hereby renew my challenge for you to stay over and face that record, as I shall give it to the people tonight or to double back to the meeting tomorrow night.<sup>2</sup>

Straton's Friday night meeting took place without Governor Smith's presence. The Governor had once hoped for a dramatic encounter with Straton as he had had with Marshall, with White, and with Hearst. But Straton did not have the stature of Marshall or White, and he was proving more wily than Hearst. Smith would make no further public reference to him.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., September 21, 1928, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>Oklahoma City Times, September 21, 1928, p. 1.

The Straton meeting in the Coliseum on Friday night drew a crowd estimated at 18,000.<sup>1</sup> Carl Magee of the Oklahoma City News thought it a fine audience to hear a preacher who did not possess the attraction of a presidential candidacy. He honestly believed, he said, that the Republican Party had no part in the meeting, nor was it Republican packed; that these were Southerners and Democrats who were "bolting on a moral and spiritual issue."<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Ham acted as chairman:

This hall cost \$800 tonight, including lights, rent, radio and incidentals . . . . How many of you present will offer to give \$100 toward the cost of this meeting?" There were no \$100 hands. A collection was then taken.<sup>3</sup>

Ham sketched the Governor's life story, bearing heavily on his humble beginnings in the slums of New York. He painted a contrasting picture of the "clean, wholesome, rural environment" that had produced Hoover. Straton spoke to an enthusiastic audience, which cheered as often as had the crowd on the previous night, but in tones "more properly described as hosannas."<sup>4</sup> He confined himself to a discussion of the Governor's record, with particular reference to

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., September 22, 1928, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Oklahoma News, September 22, 1928, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Daily Oklahoman, September 22, 1928, p. 1.

the early days as a Tammany assemblyman, including his opposition to bills

designed to extend the privileges of local option, . . . others putting restrictions on race track gambling, still others relating to the regulation of the saloon . . . and legislation designed to restrict vice, with special reference to the regulation of assignation houses and hotels of doubtful reputation.<sup>1</sup>

Straton, in his turn, broadened the charges. "As long as he stands by his rotten record," said Straton, "there are two places he will never get into: . . . Calvary Baptist Church and . . . The White House."<sup>2</sup> The rest of the speech was a denunciation of Tammany, under whose control Smith had compiled his voting record, and of the Wet forces to whom he was allied.

The meeting closed with the audience singing, "When the Roll is Called Up Yonder I'll Be There."

Thus, on successive nights, was the Smith record reviewed, but with opposite conclusions drawn. The Governor, confident that he had served the electorate well, proudly proclaimed, "Let's look at the record!" His antagonist, who would be echoed by a host of less talented spokesmen, uncovered a very different record, one that dealt with issues the Protestant Church had made its own, and around which it would rally to defeat him.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

To Smith, these could never be the real issues. They must be a cover and their spokesmen a fraud, and he must unmask them and drag the hidden issue into the light.

*Now, let's get down to business. I know that I do not have to tell you, friends of mine, in this section of the country, that the cry of Tammany Hall is nothing more nor less than a red herring that is pulled across the trail in order to throw us off the scent.*

*Now this has happened to me before in my State campaigns, but I did not consider it of enough importance to talk about. But it has grown to a proportion that compels me to let the country know that at least I know what's behind it; it's nothing more nor less than my religion. (Loud applause.)*

Not only did the candidate consider religion to be the issue behind the Owen attack, he believed it to be the prime issue of the campaign, and that by design of the Republican National Committee. In his autobiography he commented with some bitterness:

Recently published documents make the conclusion inevitable, that certain Republican leaders in this country promoted the religious issue, and that the Republican National Committee approved it.<sup>1</sup>

Those great platform planks upon which he had hoped to wage the contest faded in significance as the campaign progressed, he says:

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, Up To Now, pp. 414-415.

To my way of thinking, neither the tariff nor, for that matter the farm problem were important factors in the determination of the election. In its broad aspect the campaign appeared to me to be one of Smith or anti-Smith . . . . The campaign proved that the one thing which has not yet been overcome in the conduct of campaigns, is the ability of organized groups to mislead large masses of the electorate by false propaganda.<sup>1</sup>

There was much difference of opinion as to the importance of the religious issue both on the part of contemporary observers and later historians. Nor has it been possible then or now to separate religion from the other issues which so closely adhered to it. Especially was the candidate himself unwilling or unable to make such a separation. When faced with any of the "social issues"--Prohibition, race, urbanism, and Tammany--he angrily denounced them all as false fronts designed as a cover for the unworthy issue of religion. It is significant that in the candidate's own file of "anti-Catholic" literature, probably the major part makes no mention of religion.<sup>2</sup> He placed in this category all attacks based upon the "social issues" for he believed them all to be motivated by religious intolerance alone. To discover whether they were so motivated is often beyond the historian's competence, but the fact that Smith thus treated the issue could only exaggerate its importance in the campaign.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 416.

<sup>2</sup>Smith Papers, Albany.

From the nation's founding, religion has played an important role, though not always a divisive one. In the document that marked America's birth is to be found an insistence that each citizen shall be free to express that religion as he shall see fit, an innovation which the founding fathers thought to be the genius of the New World.

But the framers of the Constitution's Article VI and of its First Amendment and of the Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom were nearly all Protestants. In many respects, the religious tolerance they professed was less the expression of a philosophical ideal than it was practical compromise among the various sects of Protestant dissent obliged to live together in the new land. To these Anglo-Saxon Protestants the Romanism they had left behind in Europe and which their English ancestors had abandoned two centuries before was the very antithesis of the freedoms they were about to establish. They had seen the effects of clerical interference in European governments, and some had felt the heavy hand of religious persecution; they had no desire to perpetuate on these shores a system which they regarded as intolerant, ambitious and corrupt. It was their intention to establish freedom for their own diverse sects, but they would found a "state without a king and a church without a pope."



[The "Catholic Problem" arose only gradually, however, for in Colonial days they were few and concentrated in those colonies where they were tolerated or encouraged. During the Revolution they were not an object of great concern, and many served with distinction in the military forces. But in the decades preceding the Civil War, large numbers began to arrive, pressed by famine and upheaval in the Old World.<sup>1</sup> At first these were Irish--poverty-stricken slum-dwellers. Their condition and numbers introduced a century of misgivings and misunderstanding on the part of dominant Protestantism resulting in unofficial attempts at suppression. The earliest such attempt was made by the American Protestant Association (1829), followed by the Native American Party (1837-44), and the Know-Nothings (1855-61). Their efforts were directed toward preventing Catholics from exercise of the franchise and from occupying high position.<sup>2</sup>]

The papal Syllabus of Errors (1864) and the proclamation of papal infallibility (1870) did nothing to allay American fears of its growing Catholic minority, which was now made to appear even more reactionary--anti-national if not actually subversive.

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<sup>1</sup>For a concise history of Catholicism in early America, see Billington.

<sup>2</sup>"Roman Catholic Church," Encyclopaedia Britannica, 14th ed., Vol. XIX, p. 423.

The Ku Klux Klan and the American Protective Association (1896) were post-Civil War reactions of an increasingly hysterical nature.

[Meanwhile, the numerical growth of the Catholic Church and of its institutions continued. Though at the close of the American Revolution, the number of communicants was estimated to be only 30,000, by 1818, there were approximately 100,000 served by fifty-two priests.<sup>1</sup> In 1928, Roman Catholics numbered twenty-four million, about twenty per cent of the population.] Of the three possible means of growth, conversions have played the smallest part. Though the missionary activities have been extensive, it is to be doubted that the number of converts has ever equalled the number of Catholic converts to Protestantism.<sup>2</sup> [Immigration from Catholic countries, beginning with the Irish, then the Germans, and later the Italians and other South and Central Europeans, had the greatest effect upon American religious proportions. With the closing of the immigration doors in the twentieth century, there remained only the Catholic birth rate, always a potent factor in Catholic growth.

With increasing numbers came the inevitable demand for full participation in American affairs. Particularly among the Irish was there a strong concern for local politics.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Paul Blanshard, American Freedom and Catholic Power (Boston: Beacon Press, 1950), p. 14.

The Irish were concentrated in restricted quarters of the great eastern cities, where they were able to communicate with one another, help one another, and elect one another. They were accustomed to political agitation in the Old Country and they had an advantage over other immigrants in that English was their mother tongue. They moved easily into the Democratic Party ranks; the Democrats appealed to the have-nots of every race. But especially in the great port cities were they alert to recruit the immigrants and their sons, to feed and house them upon arrival, find for them employment, arrange their naturalization, and secure their vote. Once the franchise was fully opened to these Catholic Irish, full political participation followed, with Catholic aspiration for ever higher elective office, from municipal posts to the state legislatures, governorships and the Congress.

Before 1928, the list of such elective successes was already impressive. Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, Louisiana, and Illinois had elected Catholic governors. Catholic United States Senators had been sent to Washington from Massachusetts, New York, Illinois, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Arizona, California, Oregon, Louisiana, Idaho, and North Dakota. Two Chief Justices of the United States, Roger Taney and Edward Douglass White, were Catholics.

There had been many Catholic mayors, Catholic members of the state legislatures and of the lower house of Congress.<sup>1</sup>

But great progress incurred great opposition, and there remained the "unwritten law" -- no Catholic might aspire to the White House. It was in defiance of this law that Al Smith had obtained the nomination at Houston.] His chance of election consisted in securing an overwhelming majority of the Catholic votes combined with sufficient Protestant voters who were in agreement with his political platform and would not desert him solely on account of his religion. That this could be accomplished at the state level he had demonstrated for many years. But two further questions followed: how many other states would vote for a Catholic in the fashion of New York? And would New York, or any state, vote for the presidency as it did for its governor?

Martin Conboy, in his optimistic study entitled, "Can a Catholic Be Elected?" after discussing the relative number of Catholics and Protestants in each of the states, and after conceding the existence of many other factors, turns to what he considers the crucial problem, "the difficult one of attempting to compute the number of those who may be expected to be affirmatively hostile to a Catholic for President."<sup>2</sup> He eliminates certain denominations from

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<sup>1</sup>Martin Conboy, "Can a Catholic Be President," The Forum, Vol. LXXII, No. 1, (July, 1924), pp. 76-83.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

the list of intolerants: Episcopalians, Quakers, Congregationalists and Unitarians. Mormons should not be anti-Catholic, making Utah available. The Jews, forming the population of large sections of Eastern, Northern, and Pacific Coast cities, would not discriminate. His conclusion is that the opposition would come from Methodists and Baptists in the Middle and Southern States. Here the Negro, who constitutes a large part of the Southern Fundamentalist strength being largely denied the franchise, would have no effect. If the candidate were nominated by the Democratic Party, he might expect to preserve something in the South from party loyalty and the pressure of other than religious emotions. Finally, said Conboy, more than half of the voters were not affiliated with any religious denomination and could not be expected to permit religion to have any part in their decision:

We may summarize all that has gone before by concluding that there is no such overwhelming religious opposition as to justify the assumption that a Catholic is disqualified in the minds of the American electorate by his religious profession from achieving the presidency.<sup>1</sup>

None of the arguments brought forward proved to be as simple as Conboy represented them, but the thoughts and hopes of millions of Catholics were no doubt expressed in his article. John F. Kennedy, faced with the same issue thirty-two years later, would put it succinctly:

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

But if this election is decided on the basis that 40,000,000 Americans lost their chance of being President on the day they were baptized, then it is the whole nation that will be the loser.<sup>1</sup>

[There is evidence that Smith, in his early political contacts, did not understand the magnitude of the religious issue. Insulated by the Catholic environment of his upbringing, studying in the parochial school, and campaigning in the Irish Second District, he had encountered less opposition on religious grounds than would most Catholic politicians of his day. Such opposition was the more painful, therefore, when it came.]

His earliest major clash over religion came in 1915 during the Constitutional Convention. Fighting a bill that would have taxed church property, he countered with a proposal to amend the State Constitution in such a way that government funds might be made available to parochial schools. In his autobiography, he explains somewhat lamely that he had no intention of bringing his bill to the floor; it was only a legislative weapon to be used against the church tax bill.<sup>2</sup> But it was a weapon capable of backfiring; and it did, providing his opponents with material for many future attacks. A published report of this incident so sharpened the religious

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<sup>1</sup>John F. Kennedy, "Speech to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association,. September 12, 1960, cited in Theodore H. White, The Making of the President, (New York: The McMillan Co., 1928), Appendix C, p. 468-472.

<sup>2</sup>Smith, Up To Now, pp. 144-145.

issue in New York that the Knights of Columbus, at their convention of 1914, felt it necessary to create a Commission on Religious Prejudice to investigate "the waves of religious bigotry with which the country is visited from time to time."<sup>1</sup>

While in 1918, at the beginning of his gubernatorial campaigns, the opposition was greatly increased, now religion was so interwoven with other issues that distinctions became increasingly difficult. Smith reports being a curiosity at up-state fairs, but he was a city man and a product of Tammany, and he admits that the opposition there may have been largely on that account.<sup>2</sup>

He was opposed by the Anti-Saloon League, but again the relationship of this opposition to his religion was indirect.

When the Klan attacked, however, there was little doubt as to motivation. At the peak of its strength, it could be formidable, even in cosmopolitan New York State. When it set itself in 1924 to thwart Smith's political ambitions, the Klan felt that the nation's ideals and mores were at stake, and that it must accomplish his defeat even at the expense of the Democratic Party.

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, March 8, 1915, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup>Smith, Up To Now, p. 161.

Unexpected embarrassment arose from Vatican activities. In 1926, the dramatic and colorful Eucharistic Congress took place in Chicago, bringing together a million and a half Catholics to celebrate the Mass. The papal legate, Cardinal Bonzano and his entourage, arriving from Rome, paid a visit to New York's City Hall and Governor Smith, in company with Mayor Walker, received them on the steps, kissing the Cardinal's ring.<sup>1</sup> The Congress at Chicago was itself sufficient to arouse the fears of Protestants, but the spectacle of an official reception at City Hall was insult added to injury. Said Methodist Bishop Adna Leonard, voicing the fears and the determination of many: "No Governor can kiss the Papal ring and get within gunshot of the White House."<sup>2</sup>

Before sectarian relations had recovered from the Eucharistic Congress, the pope jarred the delicate balance with his Papal Encyclical of January 6, 1928, entitled, "The Promotion of True Religious Unity." Many both within the Church and without who had hoped for a meeting of minds and for greater flexibility on the part of Catholicism in the search for common ground, were disheartened by the message. The Pope reaffirmed the unique character of the Roman Church and offered to Protestants a return to its bosom only on

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<sup>1</sup>Moore, p. 28.

<sup>2</sup>New York Times, August 9, 1926, p. 1.



bended knee.<sup>1</sup> Observers were quick to note that Governor Smith's political fortunes had suffered in the wake of adverse criticism of the Encyclical.

[Another politico-religious handicap under which the candidate labored was of his own making: the appointment of John J. Raskob as campaign chairman. Mr. Raskob was vice-president of General Motors and had voted for Coolidge in 1924.<sup>2</sup> It was the obvious design of the Governor to interest big business in his campaign, and to assure the commercial and industrial interests that they had nothing to fear from Smith. To that end, the appointment was largely unsuccessful; but worse, Mr. Raskob's presence created further problems, for he was a conspicuous Catholic and an outspoken "Wet." He had given generously to Catholic charities for which he had received public papal honors. He was a militant member of the National Association Against the Prohibition Amendment.<sup>3</sup>] He had come into the circle of Smith's close friends almost by accident. As a member of the Father's Club of the parochial school to which he sent his son, he had met Willian Kenny and Terry McManus, Smith advisors.<sup>4</sup> He was soon moving in the innermost circles, and even before the

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<sup>1</sup>"The Latest Encyclical of the Pope," Current History, XXVII (March, 1928), 796-800.

<sup>2</sup>Moore, 121.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Graham, p. 186.

nomination had begun to give generous sums to the Smith cause. [Though he was widely known as a financial genius, and had the respect of many, his appointment could do nothing to ease the pressures that threatened to split the Party, or calm the fears of those who saw a link being forged with Rome.]

*I feel that I owe it to the Democratic Party to talk out plainly. If I had listened to the counselors that advised political expediency, I would probably keep quiet, but I'm not by nature a quiet man. (Laughter and applause.)*

Pringle has noted Smith's ability to remain silent when he deemed it wise, finding him "keenly aware of the virtue of silence. He finds it possible to say nothing for many weeks, even when excited demands for a statement come from all sides."<sup>1</sup>

On other occasions, he had indeed spoken out, but usually with greater reluctance than he suggests here. The record, then, is uneven; sometimes he had to be urged to defend himself against attacks upon his religion, and on other occasions he had to be restrained by his counselors.

[The most significant defense of his faith that he ever made was in the exchange of letters between himself and Mr. Charles C. Marshall, published in the Atlantic

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<sup>1</sup>Pringle, p. 46.

Monthly issues of April and May, 1927. Marshall, an Episcopalian, a retired lawyer, and a self-made expert in canon law, was invited to write by Ellery Sedgwick, editor, who had seen a brochure written by Marshall on the topic of Roman Catholicism and American liberties. Mr. Marshall accepted without hesitation; indeed, he later published a book in similar vein.<sup>1</sup>

To induce Smith to reply, the aid of Franklin D. Roosevelt was enlisted. The future president was not enthusiastic about airing the religious issue, but since the editor was about to print the Marshall letter, he sent Smith the advance proofs and urged that an answer be made.<sup>2</sup> Smith's first reaction was one of bewilderment and hurt. He refused to answer, declaring to Judge Proskauer:

To tell you the truth, I've read it. But I don't know what the words mean. I've been a Catholic all my life -- a devout Catholic, I believe -- and I never heard of these encyclicals and papal bulls and books that he writes about. They have nothing to do with being a Catholic, and I just don't know how to answer such a thing.<sup>3</sup>

The learned arguments of Marshall were not Smith's kind of Catholicism. He was shocked that anyone could believe that he or his church was capable of disloyalty. With

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<sup>1</sup>Charles C. Marshall, The Roman Catholic Church and the Modern State (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1931).

<sup>2</sup>Moore, p. 70.

<sup>3</sup>Warner and Daniel, p. 183.

respect to Catholicism, he was naive, and his simplicity made it difficult for him to understand the ecclesiastical issues or the prejudice of which his countrymen were capable. He could not gauge its strength or move to meet it. The eventual response to Marshall was, therefore, the work of a group.] Judge Proskauer, a Jew, undertook the major drafting. But for the technical argument, an expert was needed, one of unquestioned patriotism -- Father Francis P. Duffy, Chaplain of the 165th Regiment and an authentic war hero. [The reply was finally submitted to Patrick Cardinal Hayes, Archbishop of New York, who pronounced it "both good Catholicism and good Americanism."<sup>1</sup>] Smith studied the theological argument, edited the language, made it his own. He was satisfied that the case had been well prepared and well presented. "Nothing that has happened since has refuted a single line contained in that reply," he claimed in 1929. "Nothing in it has ever been successfully challenged."<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Sedgwick said of Mr. Marshall that "he loved Rome as the Devil loves holy water," but that Marshall appeared fair and public-spirited. He had a lawyer's training and a good knowledge of church polity and history.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 184-185.

<sup>2</sup>Smith, Up To Now, p. 368.

[The Marshall letter opened with a tribute to Smith's character and accomplishments] -- his spirit of fair play and justice. [But through all this, said Marshall, there is a "note of doubt" that as a loyal and conscientious Roman Catholic he could support and defend the Constitution of the United States in those areas in which it came into conflict with the precepts of his Church.<sup>1</sup> He noted that Smith had never answered these doubts, and that to continue thus silent would be "to neglect the profoundest interests in our national welfare." ] He called for a declaration by Smith that would clear away all controversy. The point at issue was not superficial, Marshall insisted, but belonged to "the very life and being of the Church." It was derived from the basic political doctrine of the Roman Church, that God had divided all human authority into two parts; the secular State and the Christian Church. He quoted from an 1885 encyclical of Pope Leo XIII on the Two Powers, "the one being set over the divine, and the other over human things."

Thus far, most Protestants would agree. But [the Roman Church has greater pretensions, said Marshall, which she has asserted and defended for a millenium and a half: first, that no other religious body is the recipient of any

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<sup>1</sup>Discussion of the Marshall letter is based on the text of "An Open Letter to the Honorable Alfred E. Smith," Atlantic Monthly, Vol. CXXXIX, No. 4 (April, 1927) pp. 540-549, and "Catholic and Patriot: Governor Smith Replies," Atlantic Monthly, Vol. CXXXIX, No. 5 (May, 1927), pp. 721-728.

authority, all such bodies standing rather in a state of heresy unless allied to Rome; secondly, that when Church and State contest any area of sovereignty, the Church possesses full authority over the civil government. From these beliefs, to which all Catholics are obliged to subscribe, springs the essential intolerance of that church, and the danger to non-Catholic citizens of any state in which Catholic influence or control may require that to which non-Catholics cannot in good conscience submit.]

It is true, said Marshall, that in theory no conflict exists, for the State and the Church rule over separate spheres. But in practice, conflict is inevitable, and in the areas of such dispute lies the danger to non-Catholics.

[Conflict with the American Constitution arises from the recognition by its framers of the equal right of all religions to existence, free exercise, and propagation. "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof," Marshall quoted. But Leo XIII had said, "It is not lawful for the State, any more than for the individual, either to disregard all religious duties or to hold in equal favor different kinds of religion." In a word, the pluralism which is the genius of American religious society, and is guaranteed by its fundamental law, is anathema to Rome. Leo XIII recognized this fully, and stated it in another encyclical,

Catholicity in the United States, "It would be very erroneous to draw the conclusion that in America is to be sought the type of the most desirable status of the Church," and it is error to suppose that "it would be universally lawful or expedient for State and Church to be, as in America, dissevered and divorced."

[The remainder of the "letter" was a discussion of these disputed areas -- marriage and divorce, education, relations with anti-Catholic States, and the excommunication of sovereigns.]

The conflict in the institution of marriage is direct, said Marshall, for here the Roman Church exceeds its natural right -- to determine the relation of the married partners to the church -- and claims the right to annul and destroy the civil contract. Marshall introduced the case of the Duke of Marlborough and Consuelo Vanderbilt, whose marriage was annulled after twenty-five years by the Sacred Rota in order that she might marry a Catholic, when both the law of England and of the State of New York recognized its validity. Since both sovereign States had recognized the marriage and granted a divorce, it was utter disregard of their sovereignty for Rome to annul it.

The conflict in education arises, he asserted, over the denial by the Roman Church of the State's primary right to control the instruction of the young. Though he made the usual defense of secular education, his case was seriously

weakened by the hypothetical nature of his chosen illustration. When the recent suppression of the Church schools in the State of Oregon was declared unconstitutional by the United States Supreme Court, what, Marshall asked, would have been the Court's view if the prosecution had shown that instruction in these schools was inconsistent with the peace and safety of the State? Under the Constitution, it would have been obliged to sustain their closing. Note the conflict, he said, that would then have arisen over the church's claim of superior jurisdiction. Many educators had challenged the parochial schools, but Marshall chose to do so by means of a "straw man," and his position was greatly weakened.

The conflict over international relations had recently caused wide concern. The government of Mexico by its suppression of the Catholic Church, had agitated North American Catholics, and raised the suggestion of American intervention. Marshall cited at length the opinion of Roman Catholic jurist William D. Guthrie, who had prepared an opinion at the request of the North American hierarchy, in which he condemned the Mexican action and justified American intervention. Mr. Marshall asked Smith if this semi-official Catholic document received his approval.

Finally, the conflict arising out of Church power to discipline sovereigns was illustrated by the attempt by Pope Paul V to depose Queen Elizabeth I of England and to absolve



her subjects of their allegiance. Marshall introduced the incident to illustrate the unseemly interference in civil matters in all ages, but it was doubtless intended to serve as a direct warning of the ecclesiastical authority which the papacy, through the threat of excommunication and eternal punishment, might at any time exercise over a Catholic President of the United States.

[Mr. Marshall concluded his letter with an appeal for a response that would lay to rest the objections to Smith's candidacy invoked by his religion. The letter was signed: "Yours with great respect, Charles C. Marshall."

Two Catholic journals rushed into print with their own answers to Marshall, but Smith needed no such defenders. Whether written by Smith himself as Father Duffy insisted,<sup>1</sup> or by Judge Proskauer and edited by Smith, as Mrs. Warner says,<sup>2</sup> his own defense is considered by many to be his finest public paper.] "I am grateful to you," he began, "for defining this issue in the open and for your courteous expression of the satisfaction it will bring to my fellow citizens for me to give 'a disclaimer of the convictions' thus imputed. Without mental reservations I can and do make that disclaimer." [He disclaimed further that he was engaged in a campaign for the Presidency at that time, or that his discussion of religion

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<sup>1</sup>Pringle, pp. 356-357.

<sup>2</sup>Warner and Daniel, p. 184.

was a part of such a campaign.] He acknowledged his debt to Father Duffy's aid in the preparation of the response, for he was neither lawyer nor theologian.

[His first and instinctive argument was that in his long career in elective office he had never encountered a conflict between religious and patriotic loyalties.] He reviewed that career in a few short sentences (In the Oklahoma City speech, the summary of his record which was presented for essentially the same purpose, occupied more than half the total speech). The only further reference to his accomplishments concerned the record of his support of the public schools, which he had claimed had prospered in his care. He emphasized, rather, the loyal Catholic public servants who had served their country in the past, particularly Chief Justices Taney and White.

[He would proceed later to answer the objections one by one; but first he demanded:

[By what right do you ask me to assume responsibility for every statement that may be made in any encyclical letter? . . . You seem to think that Catholics must be all alike in mind and heart, as though they had been poured into and taken out of the same mould. You have no more right to ask me to defend as part of my faith every statement coming from a prelate than I should have to ask you to accept as an article of your religious faith every statement of an Episcopal bishop, or of your political faith every statement of a President of the United States.]

He accused Marshall of drawing his thesis from a "limbo of defunct controversies." A case in point is Marshall's view that the Church demanded official status. [The ideal of

the established church is only theory, he said. "If religious freedom has been accepted and sworn to as a fundamental law in a constitution, the obligation to show this tolerance is binding in conscience." ] He quoted bishops in defense of the American Constitution: O'Connell, Dowling, Ireland and Gibbons. But among these are to be found the leading spokesmen of the "Americanism" movement in nineteenth century Catholicism, which was summarily silenced by papal decision. The Smith quotations from these leaders were typical of those against which the papal intervention was directed.

Regarding the supposed conflict between the Catholic Church and the State on marriage and divorce, Smith argued that the decision of the Sacred Rota was in all cases an ecclesiastical decision only, merely defining "the status of the parties as communicants of the Church." All churches have such tribunals, he insisted. But the essential differences between the Protestant and the Catholic doctrine of marriage and divorce, recognized by leaders of both sides, he passed over without a word.

Regarding parochial education, Smith showed Marshall's argument to be based upon a hypothetical violation of the Constitution -- the teaching of intolerance, discrimination and sedition in their schools. "My summary answer is: I and all my children went to a parochial school. I never heard of any such stuff being taught or of anybody who claimed that it was. That any group of Catholics would teach it is unthinkable."

On the possible Mexican intervention, he took as the authoritative Catholic view, not Mr. Guthrie's brief, but the Archbishopal Pastoral Letter which rejected intervention and proposed to let God work "in His own good time and in His own good way." With this view Governor Smith was in full accord.

[His eloquent summary formed the creed of a Catholic and a patriot:

I believe in the worship of God according to the faith and practice of the Roman Catholic Church. I recognize no power in the institutions of my church to interfere with the operations of the Constitution . . . . I believe in absolute freedom of conscience for all men and in equality of all churches . . . . I believe in the absolute separation of Church and State. . . . I believe in the support of the public school. . . . And I believe in the common brotherhood of man under the common Fatherhood of God.

In this spirit I join with fellow Americans of all creeds in a fervent prayer that never again in this land will any public servant be challenged because of the faith in which he has tried to walk humbly with his God.]

The Marshall letter and Governor Smith's reply have been presented in detail because of the possible influence of this exchange upon the Governor, upon subsequent events in the religious issue, and upon the Oklahoma City speech.

[His naivety toward his own faith and its history had been revealed when he first faced the Marshall letter. Now a failure to understand public opinion was revealed in the last words of his reply. In his expression of hope that the issue had been "forever laid to rest." he failed to grasp the depth of Protestant concern.

Though he had hesitated to respond to Marshall, [after it was done he was fully satisfied with the answer provided;] and this opinion was confirmed by a deluge of commendation from his friends and in the press. [But he was unable to gauge the depth either of the honest concern of persons who did not fully accept his arguments, or of the stubborn prejudice of those whom no argument could move. Thus he was led to neglect further defense, often on occasions at which such defense might have produced a favorable result. Smith's response to later attack on the religious issue was that the matter was closed; he had answered it in the letter to Marshall; it should never arise again.] At Oklahoma City, where he omitted all discussion of Catholic doctrine and polity in favor of a recital of his record, his character, and the related issues, he was still following the practice adopted after the successful reply to Marshall.

[This policy might have been modified had he made a careful study of public response to his Marshall letter. Press comment divided readers into three categories. The first was composed of those possessing an unreasoning fear of the Catholic Church, emotionally based and passed from generation to generation. These were unaware of the historical and doctrinal reasons for their concern and were therefore out of reach of argument. Their feelings remained unchanged. It was to these that the Baltimore Evening Sun referred: "The unfortunate truth is that a very small

proportion of the people of this country are rational."<sup>1</sup> ]  
 The Spartanburg Herald agreed that "nevertheless we face a condition and not a theory in this matter, and a large number of non-Catholics entertain a certain indescribable fear that a Catholic President would do something abhorrent to those of other religious faiths."<sup>2</sup> And the Richmond Times-Dispatch agreed: "On minds fixt in fear and distrust of Roman Catholicism it probably will make no impression whatever."<sup>3</sup>

[The second group was composed of persons sufficiently well-informed that they could contrast Smith's disclaimer with the dogma and history of the Church. These persons may have entertained a variety of views concerning Smith's own sincerity and intentions; but they were united in their belief that he had spoken contrary to the official views of his Church and in spite of himself, he would eventually be caught in the contradiction -- unable to perform as a Catholic President other than in the interests of the Church.]

This was expressed most freely by the Protestant journals. The Living Church (Episcopalian) felt that "it places him in direct conflict with the official position of

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<sup>1</sup>Cited in "Governor Smith's Declaration of Independence," Literary Digest, Vol. XCIII, No. 5 (April 30, 1927), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

his church; and that is an unsatisfactory condition in which to leave the matter."<sup>1</sup> The Herald of Gospel Liberty (Christian) thought that some of the implications of what he said ran deeply counter to the traditional dogma of his own church, and they doubted that the Church would assent to it. In any conflict, the Church's power of excommunication and threat of eternal punishment would no doubt be decisive. From among those who viewed the matter in this light, Smith would receive few votes.

[The third group was composed of those who considered themselves enlightened and tolerant. In view of the denominations represented as well as the thought expressed, one suspects that they are those to whom their own Protestantism had assumed a role of lessening importance. The Universalist Christian Leader offered to Smith its "hearty congratulations" on his "complete and overwhelming reply to Mr. Marshall. . . He has made the same answer that any intelligent Protestant would make and therefore Protestants ought to give him their hearty approval."<sup>2</sup>] This tolerant feeling was most susceptible to the Smith persuasion, and from among such persons votes in the name of tolerance may have been gained.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

[The observation most frequently encountered from all groups was that Smith had expressed an American view.] While his admirers rejoiced in it, his detractors pointed out that Catholicism in the United States is necessarily less Roman precisely to the degree that it is American, and hence a danger of later conflict unless such independence be guaranteed by Roman policy. Thus there were repeated calls upon Rome to underwrite the liberal Smith pledges, and there was reluctance to give such pledges full credit until Rome had done so.

Smith had in reality revealed a tension within his church which was not new in his day. The desire for greater independence had produced a "phantom heresy" in American Catholicism in the nineteenth century, informally known as "Americanism." Even Catholic Encyclopedia offers no precise definition, but points out rather that the controversy waged under that name was diffuse and long lasting.<sup>1</sup> It revolved about the fear that the Church in America, through long and intimate contact with American traditions and constitutional principles, may have become tainted by such beliefs, with a tendency to abandon old world ways, to pledge itself to constitutional ideals, to dilute dogma with the hope of making rapid conversions, and possibly looking toward the formation of a national church in the United States. Not only did the

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<sup>1</sup>Conde B. Pallen, "Testem Benevolentiae," Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. XIV, pp. 537-538.



ultra-conservative Pius IX show apprehension, but even Leo XIII felt obliged to suppress the nationalism of the American Bishops. There has never been a Catholic primate of America. Leo instead appointed an Apostolic Delegate, who has always been an Italian and owes his closest allegiance to Rome, an effective device in preventing further drift toward ecclesiastical independence.<sup>1</sup>

The leaders of American liberalism were Baltimore's Cardinal James Gibbons and St. Paul's Archbishop John Ireland.<sup>2</sup> They had often praised American democratic institutions, including the separation of church and state and the public schools. These men were most successful in interpreting their church to non-Catholics, and were held by them in high esteem. Since they had been honored by presidents, it was difficult for Rome to discipline them. But on January 22, 1899, the Pope brought sorrow to the liberal wing with his Apostolic Letter, Testem Benevolentiae, addressed to Cardinal Gibbons. Of this message, the Catholic Encyclopedia says:

The letter concludes with a brief exhortation for unity, as against a spirit that would tend toward developing a national Church. The term "Americanism" is approved as applying to the characteristic qualities which reflect honour on the American people, . . . But if it be used not only to signify, but even to commend the above doctrines, there can be no doubt that our venerable brethren, the bishops of America, would be the first to repudiate and condemn it, as being especially

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<sup>1</sup>Blanshard, American Freedom, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup>Moore, p. 7.

unjust to them and to the entire nation as well. For it raises the suspicion that there are some among you who conceive and desire a Church in America different from that which is in the rest of the world."<sup>1</sup>

Though it must be borne in mind that these leaders were never condemned as heretics, yet the Apostolic Letter was a clear warning to the American church, which they and their followers hastened to heed. But it was to the classic statements of Gibbons and Ireland that Al Smith had recourse in his letter to Marshall. His pronouncement had the undeniable ring of "Americanism" which, though it might well serve the presidential candidate, was not to gain acceptance at Rome or be long permitted to mould the spirit of the American Church.

*I never keep anything to myself. I talk it out. And I feel I owe it, not only to the party, but I sincerely believe that I owe it to the country itself to drag this un-American propaganda out into the open. Because this country, to my way of thinking cannot be successful if it ever divides on sectarian lines.*  
(Applause.)

[Smith shared the wide-spread concern that in the conflict over a Catholic candidacy the relations between the churches might be rent beyond repair. He did not seek the creation of a Catholic party; but in company with other Catholics of good will, he doubtless feared that should

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<sup>1</sup>"Testem Benevolentiae," p. 537.

both of the major parties continue to bar a Catholic nominee, or should the "unwritten law" be brought to a clear test at the polls and ratified by a Catholic defeat on purely religious grounds, militant Catholics in their resentment and frustration might agitate for a party of their own.] The Catholic journal America had feared the recurrence of this idea in 1927:

Catholics, as a body, have never taken part in a political campaign, and have sedulously avoided anything like the formation of a Catholic party. It is not wise to abandon that policy.<sup>1</sup>

Yet it was inevitably discussed. It remained to William Bennett Munro, a political scientist and a Catholic, to point out that Catholics could not better their position by such an attempt. None but Catholics could be expected to enroll, he pointed out, and not all Catholics, leaving it a small minority during the foreseeable future. Further, in the large cities, the membership of the new body would be practically identical to the present rolls of the Democratic Party, with no gain but a change of name. He thought that Catholics ought to content themselves with the great triumphs they had already achieved within the existing alignments.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>"A Catholic in the White House," America, Vol. XXXVII, No. 4 (May 7, 1927), p. 78.

<sup>2</sup>Cited by Moore, p. 102.

The desire to avoid a divisive confrontation had led some Catholics to go further, joining with many Protestants in the hope that no Catholic candidate would present himself, or, if already in the race, that he would withdraw in the name of peace. America pointed out that this was just as much an infringement of Constitutional rights as if he were nominated and then barred on account of his religion:

We like the idea of requesting a Catholic to cede a constitutional right, simply because he is a Catholic, as little as we like the idea of asking a Methodist to withdraw simply because he is a Methodist.<sup>1</sup>

Al Smith had chosen the opposite course, a course typical of the man. He would destroy the "unwritten law," not by forming a Catholic party, nor by withdrawing all Catholic candidates, but by winning the election. Or at least he would expose the injustice to open discussion in the attempt.

*If there are any considerable number of our people that are going to listen to appeals to their prejudice, if bigotry and intolerance and their sister vices are going to succeed, it is dangerous for the future life of the Republic, and the best way to kill anything un-American is to drag it out into the open, because anything un-American cannot live in the sunlight.*

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<sup>1</sup>"A Catholic in the White House," p. 78.

[If Smith was at his best when he "looked at the record," he was at his worst when he indiscriminately attacked all who opposed him as bigots. He challenged "the truth and honesty" of Senator Owen's motives. He described opposition to himself as "treason," "secret propaganda," "mockery," "libelous slander," "lies." Those who had spoken against him were "stubborn," "senseless," "stupid," "childish," "un-American," "foolish," "mean," and "dirty." They were moved only by "passion" and "prejudice." Those who opposed his views on liquor "cannot possibly believe in Christ." He made himself the more vulnerable, not only by the use of strong language, but by his failure to concede the right of thoughtful, honest persons to vote against him and to seek to persuade others to do the same, because, after study of the doctrine, history and aims of the Roman Church, they sincerely felt it to be contrary to the interests of American liberties to elect a Roman Catholic to the presidency.]

Key words in the Oklahoma City speech were "bigotry" and "intolerance." The first is "obstinate and unreasoning attachment to one's own belief and opinions, with intolerance for beliefs opposed to them."<sup>1</sup> Intolerance is "not tolerating difference of opinion or sentiment, especially in religious matters; refusing to allow others the enjoyment of their opinions, rights, or worship."<sup>2</sup> Smith's opponents

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<sup>1</sup>Webster's International Dictionary of the English Language (Cambridge, Mass.; G. and C. Merriam Co., 1959). Second edition.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

were not preventing the free exercise of his religion. Many of them would not have done so had they possessed the authority.

But in the heat of the contest, he largely failed to allow for a sincere opposition, as fair and high-minded as himself. He rarely acknowledged that among his opponents there were those who were honestly concerned for the danger to their country inherent in Catholic claims and ambitions; that one who had witnessed the treatment of Protestants in a Catholic land might, without guilt of bigotry, insist upon assurances from the growing Catholic Church in America that her intentions here were different; that one who had read the Papal Encyclicals regarding Church-State relations and observed their application in history was not necessarily intolerant because he asked if there had been any announced change in this dogma or any exception made for the peculiar conditions in America; that one who understands the ecclesiastical powers of the clergy might honestly fear the pressures that could be brought upon a Catholic President who believed the keys of heaven and hell to be in the hands of the clergy.

Intolerant though he was of intolerance, some points may be made in his defense:

First, one need only to read the opposition literature to discover that much of it was, indeed, bigoted and intolerant as he had claimed.

Second, he was not a student of his church's doctrine, history, and aims. He was raised in a simple faith and in the practice of basic morality. Doubtless one so naive in matters of ecclesiastical polity could only be wounded by attacks based upon the history of his church and statements of its leaders of which he was ignorant.

Third, he had not made sufficient contact with the Protestant mind fully to appreciate Protestant ideals and share Protestant fears. Especially was this true in his formative years, when he was receiving a Catholic mould from parents, priests, teachers, and Catholic neighbors. About the time of the Smith candidacy, Joseph Kennedy was insisting upon Protestant associates and secular schools for his sons, that they might be able to understand and compete in a Protestant world.

Fourth, on at least one occasion, when approached by one he could respect and in a spirit of honest concern and fair play, he had answered in kind. Charles Marshall had brought out the best in him, and together they had raised the issue above the level to which it had fallen, and Smith had learned more about his church than in all the years in parochial school and Sundays at the altar.

He did not have before him the example of candidate Kennedy. The attacks upon Kennedy were often bigoted, but his replies always made allowance for the tolerant and honestly motivated critic whom he knew to exist. Instead

of pulling down men of good will to the level of their neighbors, he lifted the issue, and sometimes the opposition, from the gutter.

*Where does all this propaganda come from? Who is paying for its distribution?*

*One of the women leaders of North Carolina was talking to me in the Executive Chamber in Albany about two weeks ago, and she said: "Governor, I have some notion about the cost of distributing election material." She said: "The amount of it that has come into our State could not be printed and distributed for less than a million dollars."*

*Where is the money coming from" I think we got the answer the other day when a woman went into the National Committee in Washington and meekly walked up to the man in charge and said:*

*"I want some literature on Governor Smith; I want the non-political kind"; and he brought her downstairs, put her in an automobile and took her over to an office where a paper is published called The Fellowship Forum, which for a number of years has been engaged in this senseless, foolish, stupid attack upon the Catholic Church and the members of that faith. (Applause.)*

[Smith was doubtless correct in thinking that no American election had ever produced such a flood of campaign literature of the "non-political kind."] It issued endlessly from some apparently subterranean source. [The candidate's rhetorical questions--Where does it come from? Who is paying for it?--could not be easily answered, for the literature came from diverse sources and was of many kinds.]



[The moderate literature was issued by the responsible churches and by the temperance organizations. Though the language might be strong, it was usually accompanied by proper documentation and showed a decent respect for fair play.] That of which Smith complained was, on the contrary, scurrilous, unsigned, and sometimes legally unmailable.

Governor Smith's own collection of such materials is probably the fullest extant. He labeled it "Anti-Catholic literature"; but, as in his speaking, he failed to make any distinction among the various social issues, and he lumped Prohibition literature, anti-foreign literature, and anti-Catholic materials in one collection.

Regarding his question, "who is paying for it?" examination suggests that the readers did, and for copies to distribute; and that the publishers, far from sacrificing for the cause, may have sometimes seen a profit. The literature was often accompanied by price lists and urgent appeals to order:

Awaken!	The War has just begun. Do your Part to CHECK VICE AND CRIME
Note	Order these Cards to distribute among your friends. Per doz., 20¢; per 100, 75¢. Order from the CARRIER MUSIC COMPANY, Corpus Christi, Texas. <sup>1</sup>

The Fellowship Forum was most urgent in its sales promotion:

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<sup>1</sup>Card entitled "BOOZE, BEAR, BOOTLEG & CO.," (n.p., nd.) Smith Papers, Albany.

Are you with us in our fight to keep the Pope out of America?

Buy a Dollar Bundle And Help Us To Help You.

Catch the spirit and aid us to distribute an extra million copies of this Special Issue of the Fellowship Forum among the patriotic Protestant forces of America. We urge you to place your order today for just as many copies as you can use. Put these in the hands of sleeping Protestants. Shake up their dry bones. Three cents a copy, only about enough to pay for printing, addressing, and mailing, or \$3.00 per hundred. Rush us a dollar bill and we will send you a good sized bundle.--Order Your Ammunition Today.

Buy a Dollar Bundle and distribute them among your friends and acquaintances.<sup>1</sup>

In another brochure, the Forum offered larger works at bargain prices: "A Smashing Reduction Sale of Timely Reference Books." The works advertised were, Proof of Rome's Meddling in America; In the Pillory, by John Bond; and Quiz Book About Pope, Bishop and Rabbi, each ordinarily priced at one dollar, but now:

At this reduced price, no patriotic American man or woman can afford to be without the facts and information contained in these wonderful books--now cut to only \$1.97.<sup>2</sup>

The Fellowship Forum was published at 339-341 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, D. C., though many of its tracts did not carry even this information. It called itself "The World's Greatest Patriotic and Fraternal Weekly Newspaper."

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<sup>1</sup>No publication information, Smith Papers, Albany.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

Though no open support was given to the Klan, it followed the Klan line closely. To its editors, Rome was the clear and present danger:

There will no be pussyfooting. The lid is off and and the fight is on. . . . There are only two sides. Either Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion will be victorious or we will stand pat for old fashioned Protestant Americanism.

Where Do You Stand?

The Fellowship Forum is going to do all in its power to prevent Al Smith's nomination and if he is not defeated at Houston, we will Carry On right up to the general election. Our Anniversary Number will be chuck full of information about the Roman Plan to transfer our government over to papal control.<sup>1</sup>

An anonymous sheet entitled, "A Mendacious Conspiracy, Under the Guise of Liberty," was equally direct:

Al Smith's first lord and master is the Pope, and his first allegiance and deepest loyalty to the Roman Catholic Church. . . . Any oath that Al Smith might take to maintain the sovereignty and independence of America would not be worth the breath it would take to express it. . . . The Pope would like to move their paupers, in large numbers, from Europe to this prosperous land, in order to give him a large Catholic population here, with which to "make America Catholic."<sup>2</sup>

A jingle signed "C. A. S." was circulated by the Fellowship Forum, and sums up the attacks by this element upon Smith:

Alcohol Al for President;  
I stand for whiskey and bad government;  
My platform is wet and I am too,  
And I get my votes from the Catholic and Jew.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

The ignorant wop and the gangster, too,  
 Are the trash I expect to carry me through,  
 And when I land in the White House chair  
 They can all be damned, for all I care.

I'll rule the people and the Pope will rule me,  
 And the people's rights you will never see,  
 And the Protestant heretics who vote for me  
 I'll reduce to abject slavery.

I'll take down the flag from the public schools  
 And put up the cross for the ignorant fools,  
 The Bible in the schools shall not be read,  
 But instead we'll say masses for the dead.

And the flag you love shall be put down,  
 And put up instead the papal crown;  
 Then the Pope of Rome shall rule the homes  
 And bring back the glory that once was Rome's.<sup>1</sup>

*Prior to the convention, the Grand Dragon of the Realm of Arkansas wrote to one of the delegates from Arkansas, and in the letter he advised the delegate that he would not vote for me in the national convention, and he put it on the ground of upholding American ideals and institutions as established by our forefathers.*

The typewritten letter to delegate Carroll from Arkansas' Grand Dragon is preserved among the Smith papers at Albany.<sup>2</sup> Governor Smith did not say by what means the letter came to him, but one may conjecture that Carroll was himself a Smith supporter, or even a Catholic. As was his custom, Smith doubtless held the letter in his hand at this point in

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<sup>1</sup>C. A. S., "Alcohol Smith's Platform," anonymous brochure, Smith Papers, Albany.

<sup>2</sup>A reproduction of this letter is included in Appendix D of this paper.

the speech, as evidenced by its bearing his hand-written notes in the upper right corner:

	100% American	
ignorant of history & traditions		
breeding (sic) hatred		
	spirit of America	
	" " Jefferson	
No greater		Our Divine Lord
mockery =		Burning +
	Menace	

The passage to be quoted -- "American ideals and institutions as established by our forefathers" -- was underscored by Smith's pencil.

The text of the letter is as follows:

June 1, 1928

[Mr. A. M. Carroll

Walnut Ridge, Ark.

My Dear Mr. Carroll:

You have been selected as a delegate to the Democratic National Convention which meets in Houston, Texas on June 26th.

The outcome of this Convention will depend upon the settlement of the following issues:

Wet	vs.	Dry
Romanism	vs.	Protestantism
Nullification of law	vs.	Respect for law

I do not know what your personal views are with regard to these issues. I have every reason to believe, however, that you are a thorough-going American citizen and as such you will give your support in the Convention to the upholding of American ideals and institutions as established by our forefathers.

A delegate to a National Convention of this kind fills a position of responsibility to his constituency. A delegate is expected to represent his constituency and vote accordingly regardless of private or personal opinions with regard to the issues in question. A delegate failing to do this will be called to account by his constituency.

I do not know what your views are with regard to the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan but regardless of your views the fact remains that an overwhelming majority of the Klansmen of Arkansas are Democratic electors and are, therefore, the constituency of the delegates who have been chosen to represent the rank and file of the Democratic voters of Arkansas in the selection of a nominee for President of the United States. The Klansmen of Arkansas are opposed to the nomination of Governor Smith for reasons well known to everyone who is in favor of good Government.

You of course know that you are representative of the rank and file of the Democracy of this State. We are hoping and believing that you will be faithful to the trust and guard and safely preserve the party and protect the tenets of our Government. And we think that both can be best perserved (sic) by lending your influence against Al. Smith.

With best wishes, I remain

Cordially yours,  
(signed) J. A. Comer  
GRAND DRAGON

JACLARG

*Now can you think of any man or any group of men gathered together in what they call the K. K. K., that professes to be 100 per cent. American, and forget the great principle that Jefferson stood for, the equality of man; and forget that our forefathers in their wisdom, foreseeing probably such a sight as we look at today, wrote into the fundamental law of the country that at no time was religion to be regarded as qualification for office.*

*Just think of a man breathing the spirit of hatred against millions of his fellow-citizens proclaiming himself to be an American and proclaiming and subscribing at the same time to the doctrine of Jefferson, of Lincoln, of Roosevelt and of Wilson.*

Smith denounced the Ku Klux Klan with full knowledge that many of his listeners were its members and that it was a bitter issue in State politics. As a Catholic, he was, by definition, anathema to the Klan. Though he had the alternative of silence, if he spoke it must be to denounce, for no compromise was possible.

The original Klan was founded by a group of young men in Pulaski, Tennessee, on December 24, 1865,<sup>1</sup> apparently as a fraternal society without racial, religious, or political significance. The name was derived from the Greek word "kuklos," meaning circle.<sup>2</sup> White, the symbol of purity,

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<sup>1</sup>William Peirce Randel, The Ku Klux Klan: A Century of Infamy (New York: Chilton Books, 1965), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>Henry P. Fry, The Modern Ku Klux Klan (Boston: Small, Maynard and Company, 1922), p. 127.

and the red of courage were taken as the official colors. Masks and sheets were adopted for costume, and when Negroes were frightened by an outlandish parade, the Klan had found its vocation. It experienced rapid growth throughout Tennessee and all the South. By 1867, when the Federal Reconstruction Acts were passed, the Klan was ready for its first general convention and had outgrown its innocence. For though the convention defined the Klan as an "institution of Chivalry, Humanity, Mercy, and Patriotism," it also pledged itself to "the maintenance of the supremacy of the white race in this Republic."<sup>1</sup> The formal structure was simple; each State was a Realm, ruled by a Grand Dragon; the congressional districts were Dominions, headed by Grand Titans; counties were called Provinces, led by their Grand Giants. The whole area of Klan penetration was the "Invisible Empire."<sup>2</sup>

For the next two years, under its Grand Dragon, former Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest, it acted as a political-military movement, enforcing its version of law and order, driving the Negro and the carpet-bagger out of politics. It was then officially disbanded by its leader, but continued, without its former authority, to rule many communities, committing an enormous number of acts of violence and spreading terror throughout its domain.

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<sup>1</sup>Randel, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 16.



With the removal of Federal troops from the South, the Klan's importance was diminished, its bonds weakened. Whatever constructive purpose it may claim to have served during Reconstruction was at an end; the remnants of its organization were scattered and its leadership decentralized. By the beginning of the twentieth century, it was virtually defunct.

The modern Klan was founded in 1915 by Colonel William Joseph Simmons on top of Stone Mountain near Atlanta.<sup>1</sup> Though there were three members of the old organization among the thirty-four who took out the new charter, their link with the old society was not strong, and new conditions in America provided new directions for Klan activity. Its concerns besides white supremacy, now became those of Fundamentalism, nativism, anti-Semitism, and anti-Catholicism. Henry Fry, an ex-Klansman, has denounced it as un-American and un-Christian; it is not social but political and military; its leadership possesses despotic power; it is racist; it is bigoted; it seeks to seize control of legal powers of government; its secrecy encourages corrupt practice; it is a money-making scheme; its ritual is sacrilegious.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>John Moffatt Mecklin, The Ku Klux Klan: A Study of the American Mind (New York: Russell and Russell 1963), p. 4.

<sup>2</sup>Fry, pp. 36-30.

For five years growth was slow, and the Klan's story was uneventful. But in 1920, two enterprising publicists took charge of recruiting, and between June, 1920 and October, 1921, when it was exposed by the New York World and investigated by Congress, nearly 100,000 new members were initiated.<sup>1</sup>

While the New York World proclaimed the Klan to be a cancer gnawing at the nation's vital institutions, it must have reflected, nevertheless, the fears, the hates and prejudices of a large segment of American society. There was visible fear of minority groups -- Negroes, Jews, Catholics and foreigners, and in the difficult period of readjustment after the World War, these groups became the scapegoats in a struggle for political and economic survival. The Klan did not have to create hatred; it needed only to crystallize it, give it an attractive form and a set of slogans.

Oklahoma was a center of Klan strength and political activity in the 1920's. By professing to defend civic virtue and social progress, it made a show of reverence for law and drew, for a time, the best elements of rural society to its side. An Oklahoma historian says of this period:

Before the Klan had spent its force in Oklahoma, it had reached into every branch of the state government, with members in every county seat court house, and card holders in the campaign headquarters of both major parties. It projected itself into the most sober questions of the day; its influence was inescapable; men were faced with a choice, and they took sides.

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<sup>1</sup>Mecklin, p. 7.

. . . The bitter prejudice which seized the minds of men was climaxed by the removal of one governor who was a Klansman and another who was anti-Klan.<sup>1</sup>

The Governor removed by Klan pressures was J. C. Walton, elected in 1922. He had been nominated by a coalition group calling itself the Farmer-Labor Reconstruction League, but all the nominees of the new party filed as candidates in the Democratic primary. Regular Democrats were split between two candidates, one of whom, Wilson, had Klan endorsement. The outgoing administration supported Walton, as did the Catholic Church, in opposition to the Klan.<sup>2</sup>

Walton was elected by a substantial majority, but his political position was untenable. The legislature held a majority of regular Democrats and Klansmen, who quarreled with his program and with his appointments. When acts of violence occurred which were attributed to the Klan, he declared martial law in Okmulgee and Tulsa Counties and tried vigorously to break the Klan's power throughout the State.<sup>3</sup> His early successes gave his effort a nation-wide prominence, and his courage was widely praised. But the legislature revealed its intention to impeach him, and a grand jury was called to investigate charges of violating constitutional guarantees. Two days before the meeting of the grand jury,

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<sup>1</sup>Litton, p. 553.

<sup>2</sup>Harlow, p. 370.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 372.

the Governor placed the entire State under martial law and occupied the capitol with troops. The jail, the county court house, and the headquarters of the sheriff and of the police were seized. The struggle climaxed at the special elections of October 2, which the Governor sought unsuccessfully to cancel. In this election, the "Russell Amendment" was passed, which gave the legislature the right to call itself into session for impeachment purposes.<sup>1</sup> The legislature did so, setting the date for October 17. The Governor responded by calling a special session for October 11 for the purpose of enacting laws to control the Klan. The legislature met at the earlier date and performed both functions. It impeached and removed Governor Walton and passed an act forbidding under severe penalties the use of hoods and masks and entry and assault by persons so attired. Harlow comments upon this session and its effect upon the Klan:

The passage of this law marked the beginning of the passing of the Klan as a dominant factor in the life of Oklahoma though it continued to be active for some time. Governor Walton lost his own position, but the struggle he matched with it and the storm he raised also permanently wrecked the Klan in Oklahoma.<sup>2</sup>

Five years later, the Klan was still strong enough to elect one of its own as Governor -- Henry Johnston, who introduced Al Smith from the Coliseum platform. Impeachment

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 373.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 375.

proceedings had already been begun against him before the campaign of 1928, but were delayed by the political season. On May 20, 1929, he was removed from office and succeeded by his lieutenant-governor, William J. Holloway.<sup>1</sup>

The Klan was active in its support of Prohibition, and Governor Johnston was a "Dry." Leading a slate of "Dry" delegates to the Democratic convention at Houston, he was forced to choose between loyalty to the national party or to the Klan and the State party, for the leading nominee was both Catholic and "Wet." When he chose party solidarity and voted his delegation for Smith, he widened a split that would not be healed in 1928 and would end with his removal from office.<sup>2</sup>

As a largely rural phenomenon, the Klan was not to be encountered on the sidewalks of New York, though it had groups on Long Island and up-State. However, as Governor Smith's political star rose and his name was proposed as a presidential hopeful, the Klan's attention was focused upon him and its attacks increased.

The 1924 Democratic National Convention was intended by many on both sides as a referendum on the relation of the Klan to the Party. The first test of strength occurred on the resolution condemning the Klan. [Since Smith had become its target, and since he had been fearless in his condemnation

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<sup>1</sup>Foreman, p. 326.

<sup>2</sup>McReynolds, pp. 354-355.

of it, he might have been expected to favor the strong resolution of disavowal. But he did not. "I don't feel," he said at the time, "that anything will be gained by the passage of such a resolution. It would denounce too large a group of delegates."<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to determine whether Smith failed to comprehend the depth of bitterness and the unreasoning suspicion which lay behind Klan strength, or whether he moved cautiously, realizing that he could not offend the Klan and hope for the nomination. In any event, the Klan was quick to take credit for his defeat at Madison Square Garden. Under the title, "Ku Klux Klan Prevents Cath. From Becoming Pres. of U. S. A.," spokesmen boasted:

If the Klan hadn't been founded 4 years ago, Al Smith would be the Dem. nominee today with a certainty of election.

But the Klan was founded for a purpose. Its coming was shaped by destiny, and is the salvation of this country. . . .

But for the little band of valiant Americans, called the hooded mob, by the sycophantic press, Al Smith would be president of the United States, with his wet lips glued gleefully to the toe of a shrivelled Dago in Italy . . . naming Roman Catholics to man the important offices of this land.<sup>2</sup> ]

Smith, now fully aroused, brought his full powers to the fight. As a Catholic, he could hope for nothing by appeasement or compromise as some otherwise honorable

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<sup>1</sup>Warner and Daniel, p. 161.

<sup>2</sup>Colonel Mayfield's Weekly, Vol. XXXIX, (July 5, 1924), p. 1.

politicians had done. The die was cast; it was to be a struggle to the finish.

Speaking at Syracuse, October 21, 1924, he told of a burning cross at Ithaca the night before, "in the very center of education and culture. . . the spirit of bigotry and intolerance appeared upon the horizon."<sup>1</sup> He then described a Klan christening, with the minister and the godfather both arrayed in Klan regalia. "Here was a disciple of the Christ of love and peace, breathing into the heart and soul of an infant child the spirit of hate and war . . . and doing it in the name of Christ."<sup>2</sup> The Klan had wholly failed to grasp the genius of America, he cried, and had thus placed itself out of line with the spirit of America's free institutions. His peroration became a rallying cry for anti-Klan forces:

It is so out of tune with the history and purposes of this country; it is so abhorrent to intelligent thinking Americans of all denominations, that it must in time fall to the ground of its own weight.

The Catholics of the country can stand it, the Jews can stand it; our citizens born under foreign skies can stand it; but the United States of America cannot stand it; nor can they countenance a policy of silence in regard to it on the part of the man who has a special commission to speak for the heart and conscience of the American people.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Hapgood and Moscovitz, p. 321.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Cited by Hapgood and Moscovitz, p. 322.

The Klan was not so strong when Smith attacked it At Oklahoma City as it had been when he refrained in 1924. Then it had journeyed to his own New York City to participate in his defeat; while in 1928, the nominating convention could be held in Klan country, and Smith chosen on the first ballot. But the Klan was not dead, and it sent Senator Thomas J. Heflin to New York to fight Smith in his own back yard. When Heflin spoke to the assembled sheeted figures before a burning cross in the outskirts of Albany, the Governor sent the Superintendent of State Police, his son-in-law, John Warner, to protect Heflin, providing the spectacle of a Catholic policeman riding his motorcycle among his men to assure the security of the Alabama Senator "while he made his attack on the Governor of the State he had invaded and Presidential candidate of the party of which he was a member."<sup>1</sup>

*Why there is no greater mockery in this world today than the burning of the Cross, the emblem of faith, the emblem of salvation, the place upon which Christ Himself made the great sacrifice for all of mankind, by those people who are spreading this propaganda while the Christ that they are supposed to adore, love and venerate, during all of His lifetime on earth, taught the holy, sacred writ of brotherly love.*

*So much for him (A Voice: "That is plenty.")*

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<sup>1</sup>Warner and Daniel, p. 223.



In this long speech on the announced subject of religion, this passage is one of only two which may be considered as religious in nature. Each is in the form of a rebuke. While this one rebukes the Klan, the other concerns a Baptist minister who had accused him in the columns of the Ashland Avenue Baptist of public drunkenness, eliciting the bitter response:

*Now I am compelled to the observation that the man or men responsible for that libelous slander against my character cannot possibly believe in Christ.*

*And if I was in his place or in their places, the day after they uttered it, the thing I would be most concerned about would be, "What would Christ think of me?"*

While the words in both passages relate to religion, the spirit is one of acrimonious partisan debate. Except for these two references, religion, which he held to be the prime issue of the campaign and which he announced as the topic of this speech, was alluded to only by name. The doctrinal and ecclesiastical issues were not discussed. He defended his church only by blanket assertion, by defense of his own record, and by attacks upon the character and motives of his critics.

One is impressed again that the candidate is a politician with little knowledge of, or interest in, the religious issues; that his Catholicism, an accident of birth, is real enough as a mould in which certain habits and

presuppositions have been formed, but it is not the focus of his thought. He deals with the preservation of his political career, not with the defense of his faith; and except that he, a prominent member of the church may be made to appear in a favorable light, the church gains not the slightest improvement of its status in the eyes of the Protestant nation as a result of this speech.

That he was aware of the intellectual and moral issues raised is evident from his participation in the strong answer to Marshall. But when he went on the platform--which was more significant to him than the press--he seemed not to have profited by the Marshall experience. John Kennedy, no altar boy, not a product of the parochial school, and not so obvious as Smith in his display of external piety, yet showed interest in the history and teachings of his church, or at least saw the necessity of making himself ready to discuss them to the satisfaction of the Protestant ministry at Houston.<sup>1</sup>

Smith's isolated passage on the Cross of Christ is so foreign to its context as to appear a conscious rhetorical device designed to induce at least for a moment, a spiritual atmosphere sorely needed in a bitter speech. It arose easily from mention of the burning cross of the Ku Klux Klan, from which it was not a difficult rhetorical step to Calvary. A reporter observed tears rolling down the faces of women and

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<sup>1</sup>Theodore H. White, p. 305-314.

the "leathery, swarthy men of the plains sat with their jaws hard set." But the mood, so quickly induced, was not long maintained. Referring again to the Grand Dragon, he concluded, "So much for him." A voice from the audience seconded: "That is plenty."

This brief religious passage required the use of religious vocabulary. Since such language differs between Catholics and Protestants, the speaker of either faith who would address himself to an audience of the opposite persuasion must adapt. Though the subject matter of this paragraph is not a difficult one for this adjustment, yet, in the prepared speech, he used the term, "Our Divine Lord," which is frequently heard among Catholics, much less by Protestants. In the speech as delivered, this term, by chance or by design, was dropped. However, three verbs were used concerning Christ, whom Christians are to "adore, love, and venerate." Of the three, only "love" is fully familiar in this sense to Protestants. "Adore" is more Catholic than Protestant, and "venerate" is almost unheard except in Catholic usage. One wonders how well he could have adapted in a longer passage. The only extended pronouncement of its kind addressed to Protestants was the answer to Marshall, but it was to a large extent written by a Jew. For the sake of comparison, it is noted that Kennedy, in similar situations, adapted almost flawlessly; even his Biblical references were

drawn from the King James Version of Scripture, never from the Catholic Douay Bible. His greater contact with Protestants had no doubt given him an ear for the difference in their religious speech and an understanding of the value of adaptation; he also sought the help of Theodore Sorensen, reared a Protestant Unitarian, as speech writer.<sup>1</sup>

*Now there is another lie, or series of lies, being carefully put out around the country, and it is surprising to find the number of people who seem to believe it. I would have refrained from talking about this if it were not for the avalanche of letters that have poured into the National Committee and have poured into my own office in the Executive Department at Albany asking for the facts.*

*And that is the lie that has been spread around that since I have been Governor of the State of New York nobody has even been appointed to office but Catholics. (Loud noises.)*

*We are losing time on the radio. Please wait.*

One can only wonder how "radio" was made to sound in Oklahoma City. One listener, now in his seventies, claims to recall that it was "raddio" in the accent of the Bowery.<sup>2</sup> "Horspital," another of his famous East side words, does not occur in this speech, but it has been noted that the crowd showed amused curiosity when he pronounced "Oklahomer."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Theodore H. White, p. 311.

<sup>2</sup>Interview with William Martineau, April 6, 1965.

<sup>3</sup>Daily Oklahoman, September 21, 1928, p. 1.

It is the testimony of listeners that his diction was indeed alien to southern ears. He was an intelligent and alert man, surrounded by intelligent advisors, and should have been able to make the changes necessary to appear as a citizen of the whole nation by displaying a less peculiarly regional enunciation. But he was a New Yorker who would not give up his brown derby nor sacrifice his "raddio." It may have been a Quixotic loyalty to his origins and early friends, or it may have been a showman's understanding of the elements of a colorful campaign. His diction had attracted notice:

AL SMITH PUTS "BOLONY" IN  
OFFICIAL DICTIONARY

"Bolony" and "raddio" are headed for immortality. In the next edition of Funk and Wagnalls dictionary these pronunciations, given their widest currency by Governor Smith, will make their appearance, says Dr. Frank H. Vizetelly, lexicographer and final authority on what words are included.

Both will be set down as popular corruptions, the one of the word, "bologna," the name of a sausage and a city, and the other of "radio," pronounced as in "ray." According to Vizetelly, the pronunciation of radio as in "radish" has become very common, and much of the blame he places on the governor.

But right or wrong, bolony and raddio will go in with "choose," "normalcy," "watchful waiting," and President Cleveland's "innocuous desuetude."<sup>1</sup>

At least he learned the use of radio as a campaign instrument. The election of 1924 was the first in which radio played a part. The Madison Square Garden convention was brought to living rooms equipped to receive it. By 1928,

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<sup>1</sup>Oklahoma News, September 13, 1928, p. 2.

the government had belatedly intervened to assign wave-lengths to competing commercial broadcasters, advertising had discovered its possibilities, and so had some candidates for public office.<sup>1</sup> Some, indeed, were frightened by radio, but Smith made it his servant.

During his first campaign for the governorship, he was compelled to rely upon newspapers to carry his messages to the large majority of voters. In 1922, his campaign committee "rather gingerly" made use of amplifiers in some very large halls and for overflow audiences in the street.<sup>2</sup> When radio broadcasting came into play in the 1924 campaign, speakers were annoyed by the "pie plate" microphones and the metallic and distorted sound. By the time of his presidential candidacy, Smith was fully aware of the possibilities and better prepared than most to exploit them. He had "a good loud voice," he said, but there was something more; it was resonant and understandable.<sup>3</sup>

In Up To Now, he says of radio's aid:

Growth and development of the use of the radio was such that in 1928 it played probably the most important role in the national campaign. . . .

Back in the old days of campaigning comparatively few people in the country heard the voice of the candidate or got the slightest idea of his personality or the force and effectiveness of his spoken word. In the recent campaign millions of people listened to both

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<sup>1</sup>Frederick Lewis Allen, Only Yesterday (New York: Harper Brothers, 1931), p. 117.

<sup>2</sup>Smith, Up To Now, p. 391.

<sup>3</sup>Warner and Daniel, p. 91.

candidates every time they spoke and acquired a familiarity with their characteristics and mannerisms of speech as well as with their voices. . . .

Radio replaces the antiquated method of attempting to circularize the electorate by the mailing of speeches of acceptance and of debates. . . . Nothing makes such an impression on a person as the spoken word. Oratory and the power of speech will always be effective.<sup>1</sup>

*The cabinet of the Governorship is made up of fourteen men. Three of them are Catholics, ten of them are Protestants and one of them is a Jew. (Applause.)*

*Outside of the Cabinet members, the Governor appoints two boards and commissions under the Cabinet, twenty-six people. Twelve of them are Protestants.*

*Aside from that, various other State officials, making up boards and commissions, were appointed by the Governor, making a total of 157 appointments, of which 35 were Catholic, 106 were Protestants, 12 were Jewish and four we were unable to find out about.*

*Judicial appointments, county appointments, and all positions in the various judicial and county districts of the State not directly related to the Executive Department, although appointed by the Governor to fill vacancies: Total number of appointments, 177; 64 Catholics, 90 Protestants, 11 Jews and 12 that we don't know anything about. (Laughter and applause.)*

*That about as completely as anything dissipates this foolish, stupid propaganda that so many well-intentioned and well-thinking people believe to be true, simply because they read it on a piece of paper.*

The problem of appointments, never easy for a Governor, held special problems for Smith. In addition to the consideration of religion, he had, during his first term and

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, Up To Now, p. 392.

much of the second, to reckon with the undue influence of Tammany Hall. Appointments in the City area were of vital interest to the City machine, and its requests were frequently granted. Much of the criticism he was to meet in later years would be based upon the record of these early years.

The up-state Democracy also had demands; it had been out of power so long in a Republican stronghold that it was patronage-hungry. There were proportionately more places to be filled up-state to the number of qualified Democrats to fill them.<sup>1</sup>

But even greater consternation greeted his third- and fourth-term appointments, which were increasingly made in consideration of integrity and competence rather than partisanship. Such a choice, for instance, was made for the important post of State Highway Commissioner. Formerly a political plum, it was given to Colonel Frederick S. Greene who had made a name repairing European roads for General Pershing. His political connections were only casual and he took the highways out of politics to the dismay of the Democratic leaders.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Hapgood and Moscovitz, p. 175.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 178.



During his last term the Governor's independence increased. In 1927 he announced that his Cabinet would contain eight Democrats and six Republicans.<sup>1</sup> His Tammany friends were wounded; and the Republicans sneered, pointing out that two of the Republicans were appointees of the Legislature, not of the Governor, and the others were diluted "Al Smith Republicans." Both sides suspected him, with some truth, of seeking to create a bi-partisan image as a prospective candidate of the minority party in the presidential race just ahead.

But his appointees' religion remained the chief issue. In Oklahoma City, Dr. Mordecai F. Ham, pastor of First Baptist Church, had stirred up a storm regarding the Smith appointments. It was he who invited the Reverend Straton, Smith's New York Baptist enemy, to Oklahoma; but while Straton eschewed the religious issue, at least publicly, Ham was under no such compunctions. He claimed to possess a list of twenty-three Catholic judges named by Smith in New York State. The local Party offered \$10,000 if he could produce such a list; and he did, publishing names, places and dates in the News of September 12.<sup>2</sup>

So frequently had the accusation of favoritism been made that New York campaign headquarters had decided upon a full-scale refutation. Robert Moses, New York Secretary of

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<sup>1</sup>Pringle, p. 259.

<sup>2</sup>Oklahoma News, September 12, 1928, p. 9.

State, a Jew, conducted the survey by means of a questionnaire.<sup>1</sup> Smith, knowing that the issue must be met in Oklahoma, obtained a corrected galley proof in time for the western trip. Entitled "Appointments by Governor Smith to Public Offices in the State of New York, Issued by the Democratic National Committee, 1775 Broadway, New York City," it was in an envelope on the Oklahoma City platform and now rests among the Smith Papers in Albany. The document begins with an explanation:

There have been a number of requests from different parts of the country for specific information with reference to the executive, judicial and other appointments made by Governor Smith in his four terms as Governor of the State of New York. These enquiries aim to determine the political and religious affiliations of such appointees, and presumably are prompted by statements which have been made and broadcast to the effect that the majority of appointees of the Governor have been Catholics, Democrats, and members of Tammany Hall.<sup>2</sup>

Each appointee's political and religious affiliation was noted, and a sketch of his service record was given: "George B. Graves. . .Republican. . .Protestant. . .served under 14 other governors of the state. Mr. Graves is a 32nd Degree Mason." Each department had its summary, and at the close were totals:

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<sup>1</sup>New York City Times, September 6, 1928, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>"Appointments by Governor Smith," (New York: Democratic National Committee, 1928), p. 1, in Smith Papers, Albany.

Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Blank
131	34	2	10
Catholics	Protestants	Jewish	Blank
64	90	11	12

The Oklahoma Party could have saved its reward money; Smith freely admitted appointing not twenty-three, but sixty-four Catholics to the Judicial Department, though there were some posts beside judges included. But it was not numbers but proportions that he insisted upon as he coupled every Catholic figure with the corresponding Protestant total, and when appropriate, with the number of Jews.

The performance twice drew applause from an uncritical audience. Others around the nation may have been less than satisfied, for he was, in effect, and possibly without being himself fully aware, striking at the age-old concept of America as a Protestant country, placing in its stead the idea of the "balanced ticket."

To the Protestants who had founded the American State and to their heirs, Roman Catholicism was the antithesis of all they had struggled to create. The unique separation of Church and State, the guarantees of religious freedom, could never have found birth they felt, in the hands of the Catholicism they had known in the Old World where it still flourished. When, therefore, after a half a century of independence, Catholic immigration began to reach significant

proportions, a settled, though usually unspoken policy fixed itself upon the nation: the Catholics must be protected in their right of worship and in every other freedom, for this was the law of the land, but they must not have a proportionate voice in a kind of government which they would not have founded and with which they could never be in full sympathy. It was to be, then, a Protestant Christian nation, not simply because it possessed an arithmetical majority of Protestant citizens, but because its spiritual formation was Protestant and remained in Protestant hands. A Catholic arrival must be content to acknowledge these conditions and live under the benevolent direction of his Protestant neighbors.<sup>1</sup>

Two things this "Protestant nation" theory did not allow for: first, it made no preparation for the day when American Catholics should be so numerous as to defy successfully the limitations imposed; and second, it did not envisage American Catholicism or individual American Catholics themselves embracing the principles of pluralism and of religious freedom. In fact, there was honest doubt on both sides that Catholicism could do so and remain true to itself, or that American Catholic individuals could do so without guilt of heresy. There was suspicion on the part of Protestants that claims to such liberal views on the Catholic side

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<sup>1</sup>For a discussion of the shifting religious balance in America, see Will Herberg, Catholic-Protestant-Jew (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1960).

were only a ruse that would be cast aside when they were strong enough to resume their true colors. The safest course to follow was to keep America Protestant: in population by restrictive immigration laws, but above all, in principle, by the maintenance of Protestant leadership of government, education, and other institutions.

By 1928, this could no longer be done at the local level, notably in New York, where Catholics and Jews together formed a majority, and in other eastern cities, where they were very numerous. Though Tammany Hall was apt to promote its own Catholic aspirants, the compromise eventually reached was the creation of the "balanced ticket." In New York City it might be Protestant-Catholic-Jew for mayor, sheriff, and president of the board of aldermen. But beyond the elective slate lay the appointive offices -- the distribution of patronage. Here the balance might be maintained in approximate ratio to the numbers of each group on the Party rolls. Protestants learned to acquiesce with some reluctance, as they saw their majority fade. The other groups deemed it eminently fair and "American." Protestant society, at least locally, merged into a truly pluralistic society, and the alert observer might predict the eventual acceptance of the arrangement throughout the nation.

Viewed in this light -- and this was the only light in which Smith was prepared to view them -- his appointments were above reproach, and he read them forth from the

housetops. Did they not approximate the proportions of each faith in the State? He would never understand why many good Americans shifting uneasily in their seats at news of sixty-four Catholic and eleven Jewish appointments, should not be completely reassured when they learned that a full ninety Protestants had also been named.

*Are the children in the public schools free from this? Why, not at all. In certain sections of the country the little girls and boys are used as the vehicles for carrying false propaganda.*

*Recently, in Iowa, two little girls came home to their father and said, "We are going to have another war." The father said, "What do you mean?" "Why," they said, "we were told at school that President Wilson started the last war and if Governor Smith is elected he is going to start another war."*

In this speech no other notice is taken of foreign affairs, and there was very little in the entire campaign. An explanation may be found not only in the candidate's lack of experience in foreign affairs but also in the public mood.

In the disillusionment that followed World War I the nation had largely withdrawn from international concerns. Though the leadership of this isolation movement was usually Republican, even the Democrats were unable or unwilling to make of the 1920 election a referendum on the League. The great "red scare" of the early post-war years was a reflection of the widespread distrust of all but "pure

Americanism."<sup>1</sup> All segments desired peace, but an increasing number hoped to secure it by closing the doors of international communication, of immigration and of cooperation.

This, however, was not 1920, for through the decade the nation had moved quietly into participation in international conferences and some cooperation with the League. From the Republican administration's point of view, the most striking gesture was the Kellogg-Briand Pact to "outlaw war," signed in Paris by the United States and fourteen other nations just twenty-four days before the Oklahoma City speech.

"Outlawry" was not a new concept in 1928; humanitarian reformers had long agitated in its favor. After World War I, Republican leadership was susceptible to such a scheme, for it sought roads to peace other than through the League, which it had rejected. When French Premier Aristide Briand proposed that his nation and the United States enter into a pact of mutual non-aggression Secretary of State Kellogg, urged on by American pacifists, proposed that all the nations be invited to sign a promise never to resort to "war as an instrument of national policy."<sup>2</sup> A Coolidge biographer viewed the Pact optimistically:

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<sup>1</sup>See Allen, chapter 3.

<sup>2</sup>For discussion of the Pact, see Robert H. Ferrell, Peace in Their Time (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952).

From the administration's viewpoint the Pact of Paris. . . by which sixty-two nations promised to renounce war as a means of settling disputes, was its supreme achievement in foreign affairs.<sup>1</sup>

President Coolidge considered it so. In his annual message to Congress on the State of the Union, he spoke in glowing terms:

One of the most important treaties ever laid before the Senate of the United States will be that which the fifteen nations recently signed at Paris, and to which forty-four other nations have declared their intention to adhere.<sup>2</sup>

Doubtless it contributed to the optimism with which he assured them that "no Congress of the United States ever assembled, on surveying the state of the Union, has met with a more pleasing prospect than that which appears at the present time."<sup>3</sup>

Such "pointing with pride" in the field of foreign affairs, added to the remarkable ability of the Republicans to take credit for the national prosperity, was an almost unbeatable combination. Smith, with no experience in foreign affairs, felt more at home with domestic problems. He was an efficient administrator and peerless reorganizer

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<sup>1</sup>Claude M. Fuess, Calvin Coolidge: The man From Vermont (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1940), p. 421.

<sup>2</sup>Edward O. Guerrant, Modern American Diplomacy (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1954), p. 102.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



of the machinery of government; he would become statesman and diplomat as required. Meanwhile, he must talk of what he understood. The great considerations of war and peace receive but a chance line throughout the campaign. One wonders if Oklahoma City noticed the omission, or if, in 1928, it cared.

*Here is one for you; listen to this: Ashland Avenue Baptist, printed in Lexington, Ky., on the front page of a church publication, in a box of heavy black type.*

*"Recently the papers published how Governor Smith came near to a serious accident driving fifty miles an hour down Broadway while intoxicated. He was driving the car himself practicing his wet gospel."*

*Now every body that knows me knows that I am unable to operate an automobile. I never tried it in my life, and, what is more, I am never going to try it; and the statement that I was running the car myself down Broadway at fifty miles an hour is just as absurd as the other part of it.*

That Governor Smith introduced the liquor issue in a speech ostensibly on the subject of religion suggests the intimate relation of the two issues which had become so intermingled that anything like precise analysis is impossible. From the distance of thirty-seven years, it is difficult even to judge of their relative importance, for religion was whispered while prohibition was made the rallying cry of a great segment of the Christian community.

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<sup>1</sup>Moore, p. 41.

Three succeeding waves of agitation had swept over the land--in the 1850's, the 1880's and the 1910's--culminating in nation-wide prohibition. A large number of States had previously enacted legislation; thirteen were "bone-dry."<sup>1</sup> Then in the Spartan enthusiasm following the war effort, forty-six of the forty-eight States ratified a Constitutional Amendment that became law at midnight of January 16, 1920.

Though the nation at first expected the law to be enforced, it gradually became apparent that it was being widely evaded and with impunity. Illegal brewing and distilling, smuggling, and the conversion of industrial alcohol increased. Reluctance of Federal and State governments to take the strong measures required, failure of the temperance movement to provide educational programs equal to the vigor of their legislative pressures, and public apathy combined to make the law enforcement increasingly difficult.

Even under a Republican administration, Prohibition enforcement presented seemingly insoluble problems. The Democrats had an additional misfortune--the split between their metropolitan constituency in the Northeast and their rural supporters in the South and West. Thus a "Wet" Smith could be named their standard-bearer in 1928 while a "Dry" plank was lodged in their platform.

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<sup>1</sup>Charles Merz, The Dry Decade (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, Doran, 1931), p. 23.

To millions of Americans, Smith's vigorous opposition to Prohibition was a defiance of law, divine as well as human. It was the Protestant Church that had organized and financed the movement and provided its moral base. An attack upon their noble crusade became an attack upon morals and religion; and resistance--when the attacker was a Roman Catholic--could hardly be distinguished from sectarian war, though there were many who sincerely tried to make such a distinction. As the issues became hopelessly entangled, how could a non-partisan appeal to elect Hoover remain non-partisan? "The Anti-Saloon League of America," reported the New York Times, "today formally called upon the voters of the nation, irrespective of party, to support Herbert Hoover, the Republican nominee for President."<sup>1</sup> This organization had always sought to keep the issues separate, claimed its General Superintendent, Dr. F. Scott McBride:

The Anti-Saloon League is opposing Smith solely because of his record and attitude on the liquor question.

The issue is booze, not religion.<sup>2</sup>

The W. C. T. U. blanketed the nation with literature that did not mention religion:

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, September 23, 1928, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., September 7, 1928, p. 3.

The Woman's Christian Temperance Union has distributed through the mails and otherwise, 1,000,000 leaflets entitled "The Record of Governor Alfred E. Smith," and giving an outline of his attitude toward the liquor and other questions as shown by his vote in the Legislature and his signature as Governor. . . .

"The saloon record of Governor Alfred E. Smith of New York is a fitting prelude to his promise that if he reaches the White House he will lead the way back to legalized liquor." says the leaflet.<sup>1</sup>

Senator Carter Glass of Virginia had expressed the same view more than a year earlier. Pointing out that Virginia was the home of Jefferson's "Statute of Religious Freedom," that Virginia had broken the back of the Anti-Catholic "Know-Nothing" movement, and that Virginia had at present an elected State Treasurer who was Catholic, he predicted that the nomination of Smith could wreck the Party "because he is wet."<sup>2</sup>

Had Smith, then, been an up-State Protestant rather than a City Catholic, his candidacy might have been more favorably received in many quarters, but in the South and West he would still have run under the heavy burden of his Wet views, for Prohibition was a moral and religious commitment of Evangelical Protestantism. "Since this is indisputably true," says Moore, "it is inaccurate and unfair

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, September 22, 1928, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup>Carter Glass, "Could Smith Be Elected? As A Catholic, Yes! As A 'Wet', No!" Review of Reviews, Vol. LXXV (May, 1927), pp. 535-536.

to attribute all, or even most, of the opposition to the New York Governor to his religion."<sup>1</sup>

But when Smith saw such newspaper reports as: "The Afro-American Presbyterian Council, meeting in convention yesterday endorsed the candidacy of Hoover because of his stand on prohibition,"<sup>2</sup> he could make no separation between the Prohibition crusade and "bigotry."

Thus there came into the speech on religion at Oklahoma City a section directed against the "Drys" and their churches, without substantial evidence brought forward that the opposition to his candidacy raised by these eminently respectable groups was based on his religion, and in the face of a multitude of protestations that it was not.

It may be, as Hapgood and Moscowitz have pointed out, that Smith, if left alone, would have paid much less attention to the liquor question than he was forced to pay,<sup>3</sup> presumably by the radical "Drys." He had prepared, nevertheless, detailed proposals for revision of the liquor laws.

In his opinion, the nation was tampering with the normal course of history when it enacted the Eighteenth Amendment. Without Prohibition, the liquor evil was being rapidly eliminated through changing habits, by education,

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<sup>1</sup>Moore, pp. 39-40.

<sup>2</sup>New York Times, October 13, 1928, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup>Hapgood and Moscowitz, p. 324.

through recognition of the need of sobriety in the industrial age, and as a concomitant of the rising living standard.<sup>1</sup> The principal difference between him and the Drys, he claimed, was that they regarded drinking as a moral question and he looked upon it as an economic question. But, since Prohibition was the law of the land, the situation could be improved only by further amendment that would put the lighter drinks "on our side in an attempt to destroy the habit of strong drink."<sup>2</sup> He objected to making liquor a campaign issue because a Governor or even a President had so little power in the matter. He now proposed that it be placed before the people in a referendum, though, as a legislator before Prohibition, he had fought every referendum measure that would have granted local option to residents of New York.<sup>3</sup>

Smith's specific plans were revealed in a speech at Philadelphia.<sup>4</sup> They consisted of two steps: first, he would call for an amendment to the Volstead Act, which had defined the limit of non-intoxicating beverage at one-half of one percent alcohol content; second, he would seek an amendment to the Eighteenth Amendment, permitting the States

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>"Political Record of Al Smith" (Washington, D. C., The Fellowship Forum, n.d.), p. 2, in Smith Papers, Albany.

<sup>4</sup>Campaign Addresses, pp. 219-236.



to approve by local referenda, the import, manufacture, and use of such beverages within their own borders, sale to be in the hands of the State, with no consumption allowed in any public place.

It is significant to note that the Governor, in a speech delivered one week after the speech at Oklahoma City, and in another (at Milwaukee) delivered a month before,<sup>1</sup> could present a reasoned argument on the topic of Prohibition without once introducing religion or suggesting that the attacks upon his liquor proposals were only motivated by bigotry.

Had all Drys been as honorable as their best representatives, Smith might always have been able to debate the issue on its merits; but the Klan, the Fellowship Forum, the Rail Splitter, and a host of anonymous bigots on the fringes of the movement vilified his stand on liquor and his religion in one breath, or thinly veiled their attacks upon his Catholicism under the guise of a Dry crusade. A circular in the form of a large business card was circulated in Texas:

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 105-120.



T. H. E. Devil, President  
Alcohol Smith, Vice President

BOOZE, BEER, BOOTLEG & CO.  
The Devil's Service Stations  
We are Makers and Dealers in All Kinds of

DRUNKARDS, CRIMINALS, MURDERERS, LIBERTINES AND  
HARLOTS<sup>1</sup>

An anonymous tract attacked Tammany, "Rum and Romanism," and called for Southern support for Hoover, "Who is not a Roman Catholic and is not for rum." Raskob and Smith would bring back the legalized liquor traffic, it continued:

That they are trying to break down our prohibition laws, is a mere incident in this conspiracy, and goes along with Romanism, for the liquor business, gambling and harlotry prosper most in countries dominated by the Roman Catholic church, -- the church, itself often participating in, and deriving profit from, these vices.<sup>2</sup>

Governor Smith would have been more than human had he contained his indignation forever in the face of such calumny as this. In view of his courage and his policy of matching defense to attack, he seems to have decided to meet these southern taunts in the South. Since Oklahoma City was as far south as he would be going, he must meet them there and at a level his tormentors could understand. It was his misfortune to wound many Oklahomans who felt that the whole

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<sup>1</sup>Card entitled, "Booze, Beer, Bootleg and Co.," (Corpus Christi, Texas: Carrier Music Company), Card 20-A, Smith Papers, Albany.

<sup>2</sup>Tract, "Mendacious Conspiracy," (n.p., n.d.), Smith Papers, Albany.

Protestant South was being accused, and they knew themselves and many of their good neighbors to be innocent of the offense.

Now the Governor had more to say about the Ashland Avenue Baptist:

*I turned that publication over and looked on the inside of the sheet. I saw that on the Sunday following its publication, at 11 o'clock in the morning, the subject of worship was to be, "What Think Ye of Christ?" (Laughter and applause.)*

*Now I am compelled to the observation that the man or men responsible for that libelous slander against my character cannot possibly believe in Christ. (Applause.)*

*And if I was in his place or in their places, the day after they uttered it, the thing I would be most concerned about would be, "What would Christ think of me?" (Applause.)*

To attack a Baptist church and its pastor displayed more courage than tact, for here they were powerful and numerous. They were not only Fundamentalist, anti-Catholic, and Dry, they were also Democrats, though this fact was being submerged in the issues. Were they to vote as a bloc, they would wield the balance of southern political power. To attack them was political suicide in the South, and Smith must have hurt many by his reproof of the Lexington church.

Smith had shown little desire to attack the ministry or the churches, but once under their attack, to remain silent would be to admit of guilt which he did not feel. The charges and counter-charges followed in ping-pong fashion:

Churchmen attacked Smith's record on "moral issues."

Smith responded that such attacks were motivated by anti-Catholicism, and were a cover for the "true issue."

Churchmen retorted that he had introduced the religion issue to gain sympathy and to create a "tolerance issue."

Smith's final word was that the ministry had no business in politics; that their participation was an abuse of the pulpit which they would loudly decry if the Catholic clergy had been guilty.

The churches and their ministers were themselves divided on the issue of the pulpit in politics:

Henry van Dyke, poet, preacher and diplomat, urged that the church remain apart from all partisan issues. Presbyterian Dr. Henry Sloane Coffin, president of Union Theological Seminary, at a meeting of the Presbytery of New York stated: "I don't think this Presbytery should tell people how to vote. . . . That is what the Roman Catholic Church does. We Protestants object to this."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, October 5, 1926, p. 6.

Some Protestant ministers openly favored Smith, though this was scarcely abstaining from politics in the pulpit.<sup>1</sup>

The great majority of pulpit statements were strongly anti-Smith, usually accompanied by assurances that his religion had no bearing upon the stand taken. Methodist Bishop Adna W. Leonard of Buffalo worked tirelessly against Smith. Though his opposition was usually voiced as president of the Anti-Saloon League, he was not above adding, "No Governor can kiss the Papal ring and get within gunshot of the White House," The United States, he said, is "a Protestant nation and, as long as the English language is interwoven with the word of God, America will remain Protestant."<sup>2</sup> The Presbyterian Young Peoples' Conference cast a straw vote at their meeting in Blairstown, New Jersey. The choice of Hoover was nearly unanimous. "He is a Christian gentleman," they declared, "with a sterling character. Dignified in both his appearance and speech; a man of high ideals, . . . of Protestant faith."<sup>3</sup> In Blackwell, Oklahoma the delegates to the annual conference of the United Brethren, declaring that "prohibition is the supreme moral

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<sup>1</sup>William D. Smith, "Alfred E. Smith and John F. Kennedy: The Religious Issue During the Presidential Campaigns of 1928 and 1960," (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Speech, Southern Illinois University, 1964), p. 68.

<sup>2</sup>New York Times, August 9, 1926, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., August 2, 1928, p. 2.

question of the hour," went on record opposing the candidacy of Smith.<sup>1</sup> Lutheran editors passed a resolution opposing Smith.<sup>2</sup> Nearly every Protestant church body meeting in session during the campaign months, went on record against the candidacy of Smith, usually prefacing the statement by detailing the moral issues they thought to be involved.

The Nation professed to be alarmed by "The Protestant Menace":

It would hardly be possible to persuade any body of Roman Catholics in this country to adopt, by a vote even approaching unanimity a resolution supporting any candidate for public office. . . . They would be afraid to do so. . . . Any such action by a body of Roman Catholics would bring a flood of anti-Catholic feeling which would overwhelmingly defeat the candidate indorsed.

But the Methodists indorse Hoover with impunity, and the Presbyterian leader asks his fellow churchmen to vote en bloc. Protestants seek to throw the Protestant vote to Hoover, and have no fear that they will be accused of destroying the balance of church and state.<sup>3</sup>

The liberal Nation professed to find, not a Catholic danger, but a Protestant, because religious oppression "always comes from the majority church." It recognized, however, a clear distinction between the right to express fear of Catholic threats to American institutions as Marshall had

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<sup>1</sup>Daily Oklahoman, September 16, 1928.

<sup>2</sup>William D. Smith, p. 63.

<sup>3</sup>"The Protestant Menace," The Nation, Vol. CXXVII, no. 3300 (October 24, 1928), p. 311.

done, and the apparent attempt to make the Protestant churches dominant in American politics.<sup>1</sup>

In Oklahoma City, the Ministerial Alliance, only a week before the Smith speech, had met to discuss the problem of politics in the life of the minister and his church. Three speakers were appointed to defend each side of the question; but when those who had been chosen to advocate non-participation failed to appear, politics won the field.<sup>2</sup>

This was typical of the ministry across the nation, some openly opposing his Catholicism, but many more linking his name with moral issues, and Smith accusing them all of intolerance and of placing the pulpit in the political arena. The indisputable fact that many of the ministers were Democrats ministering to Democratic congregations could not but make matters worse.

Now he was concerned that stories of his drunkenness were multiplying.

*A short time ago we had a repetition of it right in the State of New York. A woman in the State of New York was supposed to have written to a woman in West Virginia saying that the Governor was so intoxicated at the State Fair that he had to be held up by two men while he was making a speech. (Laughter).*

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Daily Oklahoman, September 10, 1928, p. 1.

*I immediately dispatched the Democratic leader of Syracuse over to the lady's house. She said, "Why, Mr. Kelly, I never said anything of the kind. I wasn't at the fair the day the Governor was there. I never saw him at the fair."*

*We immediately dispatched somebody to the woman in Virginia and she refused to talk.*

Though public drunkenness would be scandalous gubernatorial behavior in any age, especially the 1920's, it was also illegal behavior. One is not surprised at the steps taken to destroy the credibility of the tale and of its tellers, for he could not afford to appear in such a light. The most persuasive testimony -- that he had not had a drink of alcoholic beverage since the passage of the Prohibition Law -- is evidently denied to him. He could say convincingly, "I do not know how to drive an automobile; I have never tried." But he could not go further, and the audience could not fail to observe the limits of his denial.

There was a similarity, he felt, about all the stories that gave cause for suspicion:

The whispering campaign along these lines evidently had its origin in some one place because half a dozen different stories were carried back to me and each time my supposed state of intoxication was so great that it required two men to hold me up.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, Up To Now, p. 411.

A Protestant minister from Albany, speaking in Indiana, was reported to have made an identical report--that two men had held the Governor so that he could make a radio speech. Though the minister later denied having made the statement, six witnesses signed affidavits that he had.

Smith suggested that the "two men" story had its beginning in the fact of his constant attendance by a body-guard and an escort. As governor, he went nowhere alone.<sup>1</sup>

*Of course, these are just a few instances, I could keep this up all night. But I want to call your attention to this. I have certain satisfaction, a certain comfort in it. I am not the first public man that this kind of propaganda has been thrown against. Against nobody has it been used to the degree that it is being used against me; but it was used against Cleveland and Roosevelt.*

The introduction of great names who also suffered injustice is reminiscent of Scripture: "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely."<sup>2</sup> The company of the persecuted is good company. "Rejoice and be exceeding glad for great is your reward in heaven for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." Note that both of his fellow sufferers were New Yorkers and both successful presidential

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 412.

<sup>2</sup>Matthew 5, verses 12-13.



candidates. The suggestion is strong that Smith, persecuted more than they, would also rise above abuse to victory. He was plainly working for a backlash vote such as had helped to elect Cleveland when "Rum, Romanism and Rebellion" struck back upon Blaine, assuring to his opponent the "Wet" vote, the Catholic vote, the Southern vote, and the vote of all those who cherished fair play.

*Of course, it is very fine for the Republican Committee and the Republican Chairman to disown all this. It is very easy for them to say, "We disclaim knowledge of it and responsibility for it."*

The Republican National Committee had said precisely that, but Smith had never been convinced of their sincerity. He always felt that all except a lunatic fringe could be controlled by a National Committee that really wanted to do so. In the prepared speech he had written:

There is abundant reason for believing that Republicans in the councils of the party have countenanced a large part of this form of campaign, if they have not actually promoted it.

Some of the bitterest portions of his autobiography deal with the responsibility of the Republican leadership for unseemly campaign tactics. He quotes a letter from Senator Moses, vice president of the Eastern States Advisory Committee, which fell into Democratic hands because it was mistakenly addressed to Kentucky instead of North Carolina:

ZEB VANCE WALSER, LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY

Dear Zeb Vance: I am sending you an article for newspaper publication which is written by a native of South Carolina who is now engaged in editorial work in New York City. It is red hot stuff and I wish you could get it put into some North Carolina papers.

Will you not do so and if you can do so, will you not send me some copies?

Yours, ever

(signed) GEORGE H. MOSES<sup>1</sup>

The enclosed article was an attack, says Smith, full of religious bigotry and personal vilification.

The Republican candidate was on record in favor of better practices than these. In his acceptance speech before a crowd of seventy thousand at Stanford University's stadium, he had made reference to the persecution of his Quaker ancestors, and declared: "By blood and conviction I stand for religious tolerance both in act and in spirit."<sup>2</sup> Later, in the heat of the campaign, when a Republican brochure called upon the women of America to "save the United States from being Romanized and rum-ridden," he strongly denounced it:

Whether this letter is authentic or a forgery, it does violence to every instinct I possess. I resent and repudiate it. Such an attitude is entirely opposed to every principle of the Republican Party.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, Up To Now, p. 415.

<sup>2</sup>New York Times, September 24, 1928, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., August 12, 1928, p. 3.

*But I haven't heard any of them disclaim responsibility for what Mrs. Willebrandt said. She is a deputy Attorney General of the United States. She went before the Methodist Conference of Methodist preachers and said to them:*

*"There are 600,000 of you Methodists in Ohio alone; enough to put this election over. Write to your people."*

*There is separation of church and State for you!*

*(Applause.)*

At this point, the Governor, possibly conscious that his speech was exceeding time limits, began to make extensive omissions of manuscript material. Not only had there been extended applause which at one point he had sought to control in the interest of the radio schedule; but also, speaking extemporaneously, he had inserted much material not in the prepared manuscript. Thus he did not use the following prepared paragraph. Of Mrs. Willebrandt, the manuscript had said:

*This is an extract from a speech by her in favor of a resolution offered to the effect that the conference go on record as being unalterably opposed to the election of Governor Smith and to endorse the candidacy of Herbert Hoover, the Republican candidate. . . .*

*By silence after such a speech, the only inference one can draw is that the administration approves such political tactics.*

Mrs. Willebrandt's duties with the Department of Justice dealt largely with the prosecution of violators of the Volstead Act, and she had become expert in the problems of Prohibition. In 1929, she published a book detailing

her experience in its enforcement under the title, Inside Prohibition.<sup>1</sup>

Once a moderate drinker, through the years she had become a vigorous Prohibitionist and temperance worker. She excused her appearance before the Methodist ministers on the ground that the Prohibition amendment was under attack by Smith, and therefore the temperance movement--not the Methodist church or the Justice Department--was opposing him. Judgment of the ethics of these acts was based upon differing judgments of the nature of the liquor issue. Smith considered liquor to be an economic and political problem and therefore judged Mrs. Willebrandt and the preachers as guilty of partisan politics in the pulpit. They, on the other hand, were convinced that it was a moral and religious issue and when Prohibition came under attack, the pulpit was the proper place for its defense.

She protested the charge of bigotry, and a study of the "Speech to the Methodists" fails to reveal any attack upon a church, or even a mention of Catholicism.<sup>2</sup>

Editor Daniel Poling of the Christian Herald defended her participation in the campaign and her right to the pulpit, saying, "She champions a cause. The pulpit

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<sup>1</sup>Mabel Walker Willebrandt, Inside Prohibition (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1929).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 11-12.

must do more than preach righteousness. It must be militantly righteous."<sup>1</sup>

Mrs. Willebrandt was militant. She insisted that, while the prohibition issue had been fought for by the Protestant churches for fifty years without playing partisan politics or attacking any church, Smith had dragged it into politics by making it a campaign issue, tying it to religion, and labelling all counter-attacks "bigotry."

Smith's obvious attempt to cause a split in Republican ranks by calling her a "free-lance" and calling upon the Republican National Committee to disavow her work, was not successful. She did not reveal their sponsorship until the campaign was over, permitting them to remain silent. But in 1929 she said of the speech:

Furthermore I made it at the request of the Republican National Committee--and not as a free-lance. In fact, I wired the Committee asking twice to be excused from speaking there. But I was urged by the Republican National Committee in two telegrams to fill the engagement as Governor Smith had made prohibition so important an issue of the campaign.<sup>2</sup>

To forestall criticism on the religious issue, she had had the speech edited at headquarters by James Francis Burke, a Catholic and counsel to the Republican National Committee.

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, September 23, 1928, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup>Willebrandt, p. 12.

Commenting on the charges of bigotry brought against her, Colonel P. H. Callahan, representing the "Association of Catholics Favoring Prohibition," said of the speeches:

Referring to our conversation regarding your speeches in Northern Ohio.

I have now read these speeches very carefully and I cannot find where you had any criticism whatever of the Catholic Church or refer to the religion of the Democratic candidate or his campaign manager.<sup>1</sup>

In 1928, though the Prohibition experiment was nearing its end, the movement still possessed the power to separate Democrats from their party, and at least a few Catholics from their fellow Catholic.

But Smith was not through with Mrs. Willebrandt.

*Let me ask you in all candor and in all frankness--and you don't need to answer it except by looking at me with a smile (that's what you will have to do): What would be said around this country if a member of my Cabinet--if an attachee of the Democratic Administration at Albany--were to appear before a convention of Roman Catholic clerics and make that kind of statement? (Applause.)*

The charge was answered by Colonel Callahan, the Catholic Dry leader. Comparing the Prohibition cause among Methodists to the Parochial School system among Catholics, he conceded that an attack upon the latter might properly bring a speaker before a Catholic conference to urge the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 333.

defeat of such a candidate, justified in so doing by the attack of the candidate upon a religious institution.<sup>1</sup>

Mrs. Willebrandt's tactics shifted as the campaign progressed. Far from attacking Catholicism, she learned, belatedly her opponents suggested, to give credit to Catholic leaders for their share in the Prohibition movement, praising Cardinal Mercier, Pope Pius X and certain Irish priests. "I for one," she said, "resent the suggestion that the daily swelling tide of opposition to Mr. Smith may be classed as an anti-Catholic vote."<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, the official stand of American Catholicism, as Smith had predicted, was one of non-involvement. In Oklahoma City, the Southwest Courier, voice of the area's Catholic hierarchy, viewed Smith with favor as a reforming Governor, but refused to board any bandwagon. At the same time, it gave prominent place to the news service reports of Protestant abuse of the pulpit for political ends,<sup>3</sup> and reprinted with apparent approval a laudatory article on Smith appearing in other Catholic journals. Its editorial policy was represented in August by an article entitled, "Smith is Not the Church," closing with a quote from another Catholic paper:

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 334.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Southwest Courier, August 18, 1928, p. 3.

The "Catholic Transcript," of Hartford, Connecticut, sums up the situation very well when it says; "To the Catholic Church, it makes not the slightest difference whether Mr. Smith or Mr. Hoover is elected to the Presidency. The successful prosecution of her mission is entirely independent of the political fortunes of any candidate for that office. She has grown and prospered under a long, unbroken line of Protestant Presidents. She will continue to grow and prosper if Mr. Hoover is the people's choice for the White House next November. She will not fare one whit better if the honor is conferred upon Governor Smith. In this country the church enjoys the fullest measure of freedom to carry on her work. Her right to exist and function is guaranteed and safeguarded by the Constitution. She asks nothing more."<sup>1</sup>

The New York Times took notice of a directive coming from the semi-official Vatican paper, Osservatore Romano, which counselled a similar course but with some conditions. After praising Mgr. James O'Reilly, Bishop of Fargo, for advising American Catholics not to vote on religious lines alone, Osservatore concluded, "The Catholic Church unswervingly adheres to its principle never to interfere in political contests unless Catholic interests are in play, which certainly is not the case in the present Presidential fight."<sup>2</sup>

In the present campaign, then, and when church interests were not judged to be under attack, officialdom would refrain from interference. Though the extent to which agencies of the church in America adhered to this policy in 1928 it is not possible to determine, yet, considering

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., August 11, 1928, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup>New York Times, September 30, 1928, p. 28.



the interest with which Protestant Republicans watched for infractions, the paucity of evidence against them is remarkable.

*Now just another word and I am going to finish. Here is the meanest thing that I have seen in the whole campaign. This is the produce of the lowest and most cunning mind that could train itself to do something mean or dirty.*

*This was sent to me by a member of the Masonic Order, a personal friend of mine. It purports to be a circular sent out under Catholic auspices to Catholic voters, and tells how "we have control in New York; stick together and we'll get control of the country."*

*And, designedly, it said to the roster of the Masonic Order in my State, because so many members of that order are friends of mine and have been voting for me for the last ten years, "Stand Together."*

*Now, I disown that circular; the Democratic Party disowns it, and I have no right to talk for the Catholic Church, but I'll take a chance and say that nobody inside of the Catholic Church has been stupid enough to do a thing like that. (Applause.)*

The Governor reserved his strongest denunciation for this circular because he believed it to have been concocted by his enemies for distribution under Catholic guise. Neither the language nor the circumstances suggest that Smith considered the Masons guilty of the forgery.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>William D. Smith, (p. 222), believes that Smith is accusing the Masonic order of the forgery.

The "personal friend" in the Order who passed along the brochure may have been George Graves, secretary and confidant of the Governor and a 32nd Degree Mason. Another friend in the Order was Townsend Scudder, Supreme Court Justice and past Grand Master of the Order in New York State. Scudder supported Smith in 1928 as he had in the past, and Smith once spoke favorably of Schudder as his successor in the governorship. In a letter to William Ritchie, Jr., a fellow Mason of Omaha, Nebraska, Scudder declared that a Freemason who opposed the election of Smith because of his Catholicism would be disloyal both to the tenets of his order and to the Constitution of his country:

There is no connection between my Freemasonry, the Governor's Catholicism and my advocacy of his election as President. Freemasonry has no concern with any man's religion other than to exact of its members belief in God and moral lives. . . . I, then, as a Freemason, am bound to uphold the Constitution and the laws of my country. These forbid a religious test as a qualification for public office.<sup>1</sup>

But New York was not Oklahoma, and it may be that George Graves and Judge Scudder were not quite typical even of New York Masonry. Proof is lacking that the Masons who supported Smith were many, or that the Order's basic orientation was altered, even in New York.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, September 16, 1928, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup>While the Meza collection of anti-Catholic literature from the 1960 campaign (Rev. Herbert Meza, Texas City, Texas) contains Masonic literature strongly opposing Kennedy on religious grounds, the Smith Papers do not reveal Masonic participation in 1928.

*[Let me make myself perfectly clear. I do not want any Catholic to vote for me on the 6th of November because I am a Catholic.]*

*If any Catholic in this country believes that the welfare, the well-being, the prosperity, the growth and the expansion of the United States is best conserved and best promoted by the election of Mr. Hoover, I want him to vote for Hoover and not for me. (Applause.)*

*But on the other hand, I have the right to say that any citizen of this country that believes I can promote its welfare, that I am capable of steering the ship of State safely through the next four years, and then votes against me because of my religion, he is not a real, pure, genuine American. (Applause.)* ]

Nearly identical pronouncements had been made by Hoover. Though Will Rogers poked fun at these protestations, suggesting that both candidates would welcome the Mohammedan vote,<sup>1</sup> their sincerity is largely beyond our investigation. However, on the basis of September predictions, more political courage was required by Governor Smith, for the polls showed him running far behind. On the day of the Oklahoma City speech, the Daily Oklahoman disclosed the first results of the Literary Digest poll in an article date-lined New York:

Hoover is ahead of Smith in the first scattering returns of the Literary Digest's 19,000,000-ballot nation-wide "straw" poll for president.

Of the 32,350 ballots returned Hoover has 21,756 votes and Smith has 10,222 votes making a percentage of 67.3 of the total for the Republican candidate as

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, November 5, 1928, p. 25.

against 31.6 for the Democratic leader. The other 2.1 per cent of the votes are divided among the three minor contenders.<sup>1</sup>

[It is not apparent that Catholics widely heeded the Smith admonition against "voting their religion." Their support may have stemmed from his Catholicism, or from their previous membership in the Party, or from resentment of anti-Catholic propaganda. The popular vote was exceptionally high throughout the nation--67.5 per cent of all those eligible--but especially is this true in Catholic districts. Boston had a 44 per cent heavier vote than in 1924.<sup>2</sup> A large Catholic vote moved Massachusetts and Rhode Island into the Democratic column for the first time. Much of the increase may have been from Catholic women who had not previously taken an interest in the franchise.

The impressionistic evidence is that the Catholic vote went heavily to Smith, though it is equally evident that it came to him in larger part from new Catholic voters than from Republican Catholic voters.

[Smith's closing appeal,] omitted for lack of time, but appearing in the manuscript, was the fullest statement in this speech of his convictions regarding church-state relations. He [reminded his fellow Democrats that they were

<sup>1</sup>Daily Oklahoman, September 30, 1928, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>William D. Leuchtenburg, The Perils of Prosperity, 1914-32 (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 235.

of the party of Thomas Jefferson, who wished to be remembered as the author of the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom. He reminded all Americans that this Statute had become a part of the nation's sacred heritage. He referred next to the constitutional provision that no religious test should be required of seekers for public office, turning the tables on attackers who feared he would undermine the constitutional separation by accusing them of undermining it when they opposed him on religious grounds. He claimed to be eligible for the nation's highest office because he was "a good Christian," "a good American," and "a product of America and of American institutions." "The absolute separation of State and Church is part of the fundamental basis of our Constitution. I believe in that separation, and in all that it implies. That belief must be a part of the fundamental faith of every true American."

Smith insisted in this peroration that not only in the constitutional sense but in an increasingly practical sense, to be a good Catholic was to be a "good Christian"; to be a good Irish immigrant was to be a "good American"; and that the parochial school, Tammany Hall and the sidewalks of New York are "American institutions." "Everything I am, everything I hope to be, I owe to these institutions."

As for the constitutional separation, he not only would defend it as his official duty, but because he believed in it "and in all that it implies." "It represents the most vital principle that ever was given any people." ]

*Now, instead of all this talk--and this is the last night I will devote to it--what should we be doing?*

*We should be debating farm relief. We should look into what I have said about it, what Hoover had said about it; what the Democratic platform says about it; what the Republican platform says about it, and what the record of the last eight years in Washington shows.*

*Water power--the same thing.*

*Flood control--the control of the waters in the Mississippi Valley in the interest of the preservation, life and property of countless millions of our citizens.*

*Reorganization of the Government in Washington in the interest of economy and greater efficiency.*

Here were issues worthy of the campaign--Smith issues without abstractions, the kind upon which he had been working his administrative magic since Assembly days, and which had made him an expert in government. They were domestic issues, for these were all he knew; and, except for the farm problem, he had already found statewide solutions, needing only to be expanded to the national level. They were problems for which a Commission could be appointed, preferably bi-partisan, chaired by a disinterested and incorruptible expert. Legislation would be recommended to a hostile Congress, and when it failed of passage, an appeal would be made to the people. Once enacted into law, it would become a part of the remaking of a nation as he had already remade a state. It would be administered by expert and selfless appointees, while President Smith communed with the people on the sidewalks of America.

*Let this debate be held, and let us put down forever in this country this un-American un-Christianlike doctrine that is finding its way into this campaign.*

*Let us debate it on the level. Bring it out in the open, have the record consulted and the platforms scrutinized; I am satisfied that the result on the sixth of November will show an overwhelming victory for the Democratic Party. (Prolonged applause.)*

[The speech was climaxed by a hopeful expression in two parts: that there might be an end to religious intolerance, the campaign being waged upon the basis of platform issues; and that there might be a Democratic victory in November. Both wishes were to be denied, wholly or in part.]

Press debate of the speech illustrated the public's response to the plea for tolerance. It may be divided into comment (1) concerning the speaker's performance, (2) concerning his lines of thought, and (3) concerning the results of the speech, immediate and predicted.

Performance.--The most favorable response was to the speaker's courage, which was widely commended. The Oklahoman thought it "a fighting speech," which "caught the mood of his hearers. . . . Nor did the crowd seem disappointed in Al Smith, the man, and the dynamic, colorful master of platform oratory he proved to be."<sup>1</sup> A Birmingham, Alabama paper called it "an explosion of outraged righteousness," and the Atlanta Constitution doubted whether American

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<sup>1</sup>Daily Oklahoman, September 21, 1928, p. 1.

political history had produced "a bolder or a more courageous address."<sup>1</sup> The Oklahoma City Times, in an editorial, declared that, "as to the crowd, it was all with Smith. He is a great actor before the microphones, has perfect command of himself, knows gestures, controls his voice well. . . . He is a great guy on the platform."<sup>2</sup>

The Oklahoma News, a bolting Democratic paper, felt, on the other hand, that "he did not give a demonstration of the great campaign talent he is reputed to have," adding:

He showed irritation and made it manifest that the criticism directed at him had worked its way under his skin. The irritation added to his courage but it subtracted from his discretion.

Governor Smith did not rise to the rating we had placed upon him. He did not display that reserve dignity with (which) the American people love to see presidents clothe themselves. He talked like a hard-pressed candidate for the state legislature.<sup>3</sup>

The same paper observed that four-fifths of the audience "sat in undemonstrative silence," the noise being created by out-of-town groups who were willing to shout in the safety of anonymity.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cited in The Literary Digest, October 13, 1928, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup>Oklahoman City Times, cited in Harlow's Weekly, "About Politics and Politicians," October 3, 1928, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup>Oklahoma News, September 21, 1928, editorial, "Turning on the Light," by Carl Magee, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 1.



Content.--The Governor's professional supporters and the previously committed newspapers were enthusiastic about the content of the speech. The Democratic Philadelphia Record says of the speech:

It will be engraved indelibly upon American records, because for the first time since the erection of the republic it joins battle in defence of the very ideals and principles upon which this nation and its institutions were builded.<sup>1</sup>

Other papers approved the candidate's choice of subject, agreeing with his evaluation of the "whispering campaign," without expressing approval of the nature of his defense. In this vein, the Cleveland Plain Dealer said:

The Democratic candidate is being victimized by a prejudice which violates decency, nullifies a fundamental principle of popular government, and puts to shame the solemn convictions of American statesmen, from Washington to Roosevelt.<sup>2</sup>

The overwhelming journalistic response, however, while professing sympathy for the Governor in his predicament, chose to find fault with his approach to the problem, and with his choice of arguments.

The Oklahoman, Democratic but not supporting Smith, declared:

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<sup>1</sup>Cited in The Literary Digest, October 13, 1928, p. 81

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

He stressed the so-called religious question, denounced former Senator Robert L. Owen, and went into a lengthy defense of his record as a public official in New York. All of which was unnecessary.

What Governor Smith should have talked about in Oklahoma was the fundamental questions of the presidential issues of the campaign. . . . National policies are deep subjects and Governor Smith seems to be staying entirely in shallow waters.<sup>1</sup>

The News thought his attitude defensive and his recital of his public record tedious. Everyone knew him to be a great Governor of New York, but they wished to hear how he intended to become a great President. "He gave no reason why anyone should be for him. He confined himself to reasons why no one need be against him. This will never win for the candidate of a minority party."<sup>2</sup>

There was wide objection to his sweeping charge that all opposition to him was for religious reasons. Said the News: "Such intolerance on his part is understandable, but that does not justify it. . . . He went further. He tried to indict the entire Republican National Committee." The News thought his evidence weak: "the vaporizing of a klansman, a tale of two school girls, and the unsubstantiated report of a woman."<sup>3</sup> The Republican National Committee flatly denied the charge: "There are two things which Republicans do not deal with in this campaign," said Senator

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<sup>1</sup>Daily Oklahoman, September 24, 1928, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Oklahoman News, September 21, 1928, editorial, "Turning on the Light," by Carl Magee, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

George Moses, vice-chairman of the Advisory Committee. "We do not discuss religion and we do not engage in brawls with women."<sup>1</sup>

The Oklahoman thought that his followers may have sighed in relief when he omitted the vexed question of Prohibition, but that this left the party in Oklahoma open to attack. In general, it felt that "he didn't cover enough territory in his speech--that he should have struck the key to more of the national issues."<sup>2</sup>

Outside the city, the Guthrie Leader agreed that the topic was ill-chosen, asserting that "no defense was needed. It was an aggressive stand on real American issues that was needed." To dwell on whisperings and personalities was beneath the presidential dignity and was a disappointment to his hearers.<sup>3</sup>

The Bartlesville Enterprise declared that the New Yorker did not know what Oklahomans were interested in or what they required of a president.<sup>4</sup>

It was the almost unanimous opinion of Oklahoma newspapers that the social issues and the full-scale defense of religion were not well-chosen speech materials for the occasion; that Oklahomans deserved to hear a high

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, September 22, 1928, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Daily Oklahoman, September 22, 1928, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup>Cited in Harlow's Weekly, October 3, 1928, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

level discussion of the issues as was being given to other cities on the tour; and that hearers felt demeaned, or should have, for being chosen as recipients of the tirade.

Results.--The Oklahoma Party could feel honored, however, in the choice of their capital for a visit, if not in the choice of the topic of the speech. Smith's showing himself and his personality in the city should have the effect of helping to unite the divided and apathetic organization. A syndicated Oklahoma columnist pointed out that the visit had been an opportunity for healing Party wounds:

All factions were, at least ostensibly, together for once. . . . Klansmen rubbed shoulders with rabid antis. Pro-Johnston and anti-Johnston leaders shook hands before Smith.<sup>1</sup>

Scott Ferris, Democratic National Committeeman, thought the speech "a big success" that would set the organization on its way. "The reason I say so is because twenty or thirty Democrats who haven't been around volunteered Friday to make speeches and travel at their own expense."<sup>2</sup> Governor Johnston, ex-Governor Cruce, and some other Party leaders were thus led to commit themselves for the first time.

The Oklahoma City Times professed to believe that few votes were changed, most voters having long ago made up their minds on the religious issue:

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Daily Oklahoman, September 22, 1928, p. 2.

Those who vote as they do because of religious prejudices will still hold the man's faith against him, most unjustly. Those who are concerned with policies of government. . .gained little enlightenment from the Governor's address here.<sup>1</sup>

The News even feared that this approach to the question, "if carried much further," would "make the religious issue a greater factor in the campaign" than it had already become. It rejoiced that he had promised not to speak of it again and hoped that he would adhere to this decision.<sup>2</sup>

Rebuttal of the speech materials was not long in coming. The principal object of attack, Senator Owen, announced that he would begin active campaigning against Smith in Oklahoma at the State Convention of the Women's Christian Temperance Union at Enid.<sup>3</sup> Mrs. Willebrandt, speaking at another Methodist Conference in Ohio, sought to answer the Governor's attack by renewed insistence that her attitude toward his candidacy was based upon his pronouncements regarding Prohibition and had "not a thing to do with his religion."<sup>4</sup> Not a few voices were raised in defense of the right to attack both liquor and Tammany without being branded as religious bigots.

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<sup>1</sup>Cited in Harlow's Weekly, October 3, 1928, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup>Oklahoma News, September 21, 1928, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup>New York Times, September 22, 1928, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup>The Literary Digest, October 13, 1928, p. 9.

Even the bold and unvarnished issue of religion alone was far from dead. A democratic campaign speech now raised the question of Hoover's Quaker faith, which, committing him to pacifism, should unfit him to be Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces.<sup>1</sup> As the campaign train, departing the Oklahoma scene, rolled north and west, a Methodist Church paper was brought on board at Wichita, Kansas, bearing the scurrilous poem, "Alcohol Al's Platform." And at Newton a boy in the crowd meeting the Governor at the station, distributed copies of the Fellowship Forum bearing a headline which read, "Roman Catholic Clerical Party Opens Big Drive to Capture America for the Pope."<sup>2</sup>

[Not only did the Governor fail in his attempt to put an end to bigotry in the campaign, but his hope of vindication on November 6 was dashed by a Republican electoral vote of 444 to his 87. The popular vote was more than 21,000,000 to 15,000,000. Even the "Solid South" was broken, only Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina remaining in the Democratic fold. In the North, Massachusetts and Rhode Island, heavily Roman Catholic, went Democratic for the first time. The rest of the nation, including Oklahoma, belonged to Mr. Hoover, while both Houses of the Congress increased their Republican majorities.]

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>New York Times, September 22, 1928, p. 2.

While the causes of victory and defeat were argued, Governor Smith's character and the nature of the campaign he had waged were generally praised. "Whatever the years may bring forth, Alfred E. Smith may always walk among us unafraid and unashamed," said the pro-Hoover New York Evening Post.<sup>1</sup> The Republican Cincinnati Times-Star concurred:

He made a gallant fight. His rough-and-tumble campaign oratory has become almost a part of the household furniture of millions of American homes. It is ironical that so colorful and likable a man, with so fine a record of efficiency in public office should be so terrifically beaten in a national election.<sup>2</sup>

So also did the independent Louisville Courier-Journal:

This manly man, this sound and successful statesman, made a campaign which for candor, courage, and grasp of the issues confronting the country, had never been surpassed in the history of American politics.<sup>3</sup>

The deeper meaning of the election results was more difficult to ascertain.

Prohibition organizations were sure that it had been a national referendum on the Eighteenth Amendment. The Woman's National Committee for Law Enforcement stated flatly:

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<sup>1</sup>Cited in, The Literary Digest, November 17, 1928, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

It was not the tariff, nor the farm issue, nor prosperity, but the menace of the return of the old saloon which led millions of women who had never voted to cast their first ballot for Herbert Hoover.<sup>1</sup>

F. Scott McBride, General Superintendent of the Anti-Saloon League, declared that after what happened to Governor Smith, the Democrats would not dare to nominate another man who favored any change in the liquor laws. On the other hand, the New York Times, wet and pro-Smith, editorialized that even should their candidate lose, if he amassed a larger vote than previous Democratic aspirants, this would be a referendum for repeal.<sup>2</sup> He did draw the largest Democratic popular vote in history.

But the greater portion of press opinion conceded the presence of multiple issues intertwined with the Prohibition vote, for the dry South had split, the driest portions staying with Smith, and wet Wisconsin had gone with Hoover. So had anti-Prohibition Maryland in a land slide.<sup>3</sup>

[Father John A. Ryan, of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, was equally certain that religion had been the decisive factor. Choosing eight States whose popular vote needed but 10 per cent shift from Hoover to Smith, and three requiring 15 per cent, he compiled an electoral college

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<sup>1</sup>Cited in the Literary Digest, November 24, 1928, p.14.

<sup>2</sup>New York Times, October 21, 1928, III, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup>Fabian Franklin, "Analyzing the Election Results," Current History, December, 1928, p. 372.



total of 269, sufficient to elect. He insisted that more than this percentage of the votes cast in these States had gone to Hoover for religious reasons.<sup>1</sup> The increase in the voting of rural women alone, he insisted, was sufficient to account for the religion-determined margin in the above argument. Though similar arithmetic has been employed by the losers in every American election, and though many observers had noted the vast increase of Catholic women voters in 1928, Dr. Ryan was nevertheless prepared to declare:

It is my deliberate judgment that. . . without the religious factor Governor Smith would not have been defeated.<sup>2</sup>

In a bitter paragraph he deplored this violation of the Sixth Amendment to the Constitution in an election that did "violence to the most fundamental and valuable traditions of the America that we have known and loved."<sup>3</sup>

Many astute observers of the day and commentators of the next generation have agreed, however, that the issue of Roman Catholicism was by no means alone decisive. Among them was Herbert Hoover, who in his Memoirs, commented on Smith's religion as an issue: "Had he been a Protestant, he would

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<sup>1</sup>John A. Ryan, "A Catholic View of the Election," Current History, December, 1928, p. 378.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

certainly have lost and might even have had a smaller vote."<sup>1</sup> Hoover thought the decisive issues to be: "prosperity, prohibition, farm tariffs, Tammany, and the 'snuggling' up of the Socialists."<sup>2</sup> He declared that the religion issue had worked both ways, as witness Smith's carrying Massachusetts, traditionally Republican, but strongly Catholic.

In 1960 Richard Hofstadter wrote that "a little thoughtful attention to the history of the 1920's will convince almost any student that there was not a Democrat alive, Protestant or Catholic, who could have beaten Hoover in 1928."<sup>3</sup> He lists four insuperable barriers to Democratic victory:

(1) "Republican prosperity" was at its golden peak in 1928, and Hoover promised to be its best custodian.

(2) Hoover possessed a rich background in public affairs and enjoyed an immense prestige. Only a few years earlier, he would have been welcomed as the candidate of either party.

(3) The Democratic Party was in a state of seemingly hopeless decay. The Republicans, numerically superior, could enter confidently any national election, knowing that to win they had only to prevent the backsliding of ten per cent of their supporters.

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<sup>1</sup>Herbert C. Hoover, Memoirs: The Cabinet and the Presidency (New York: the MacMillan Co., 1952), p. 208.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Richard Hofstadter, "Could a Protestant Have Beaten Hoover in 1928?" The Reporter, March 17, 1960, pp. 31-33.

(4) Finally, the Democrats had no really good issue. On most political issues, their platform resembled that of the Republicans. The tariff was dull. The only gripping issue was Prohibition, upon which they were hopelessly divided.

Ruth C. Silva's re-examination of the 1928 election is a most careful study of voting behavior.<sup>1</sup> She has sought to determine by arithmetical procedures (1) whether Smith was a weak candidate, and (2) whether his religion was the principal cause of his defeat. Using as a measure of candidate strength Smith's lead over the Democratic congressional ticket, she noted that he carried eight states with 87 electoral votes and led the congressional ticket in 16 others having an additional 201 electoral votes, for a total of 22 more votes than required to elect. In only six elections in this country has the Democratic nominee done better in this respect.<sup>2</sup> Silva further tested the Smith strength as measured by his gain over Davis relative to Hoover's gain over Coolidge, with similar results.<sup>3</sup> Recognizing the multiple character of the issue, she applied multiple-regression analysis to the four related issues: liquor, urbanism, foreign-stock origin and religion. She concluded that of the

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<sup>1</sup>Ruth C. Silva, Rum, Religion, and Votes: 1928 Re-examined (University Park, Pa.: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1962).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

four, only the foreign stock issue constituted a significant factor in explaining Smith's strength or weakness.<sup>1</sup>

In a surprising conclusion, she asserted that Smith was a strong candidate running in an overwhelmingly Republican year, and that his party affiliation, not his religion or his views on Prohibition, hurt him at the polls, and that these two factors may even have helped him.<sup>2</sup>

[The Democratic candidate in 1928 might hope then, not for victory, but to hold the Democratic areas, to extend Democratic influence wherever possible, and to revive the spirit of the Party. Smith failed in the first, losing half the states of the old Confederacy. But he accomplished the extension of his party's influence in other sections, principally in the great cities and in Catholic New England. The twelve greatest American cities, taken together, gave him a plurality of 38,000 votes. In contrast, the two previous Democratic candidates had lost these same cities by 1,638,000 and 1,252,000 votes.<sup>3</sup> It was in this metropolitan milieu that the Party was to have its great accretion of strength in 1932, relieving it from dependence upon the South, introducing to its rolls the ethnic groups who had not fully participated in the past. There was also a strong Democratic

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>3</sup>Richter and Dulce, p. 96.

gain in the Middle West and the West in 1928 over 1920 and 1924.<sup>1</sup> Whereas the losses in the South were temporary, the gains in other areas were permanently held. Smith helped this new urban civilization to build its political precedents, coin its catch-words and its cliches, for it had difficulty in identifying with log cabins and rail-splitting.

Party spirit was prepared for great things under other leadership in the next campaign, for Alfred E. Smith had waged a vigorous, aggressive campaign such as Democrats had not seen since Wilson, breathing into the Party the will to win.]

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<sup>1</sup>Cortez A. M. Ewing, Presidential Elections From Abraham Lincoln to Franklin D. Roosevelt (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1940), p. 38.

## CHAPTER III

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

#### Summary of the Speech

The Oklahoma City speech was the only major pronouncement by the candidate on the topic of religion during the 1928 campaign. It was made before a Party audience estimated to number between 18,000 and 25,000 in the Stockyards Coliseum on September 20, 1928. The subject was one which the speaker had long avoided, but curiosity and concern led many of his hearers in Oklahoma and throughout the nation to an eager anticipation.

Oklahoma, like all the South, was solidly Democratic, but seriously divided over the "social issues" personified by the candidacy of Alfred E. Smith, four-time Governor of New York. Since the party platforms of the two major parties were very similar, the social issues pre-empted the field of debate and the attention of the electorate throughout a violent campaign. In Oklahoma City the person of the candidate stood in sharp contrast to that of his hearers. A majority were Prohibitionists; he was "Wet" in policy and in practice. They were members of a rural society; he was a product of the nation's greatest metropolis. They were predominantly

native-born; he openly championed the cause of the immigrant and his sons. Ninety-eight per cent of Oklahoma's population was Protestant; Smith was a devout and outspoken Roman Catholic and former altar boy. He was a product of the Manhattan Democratic political machine called Tammany Hall, which embodied all these issues, and in addition, had become a synonym for graft and corruption.

The audience was somewhat smaller than anticipated by its organizers, and newsmen reported that the frequent bursts of applause were produced by a minority of those present. Governor Smith spoke, as was his custom, from notes penciled on envelopes. A prepared manuscript was given to reporters on the afternoon of the speech. An acknowledged master of extemporaneous speaking, Smith took advantage of opportunities to adapt his materials, cut and lengthen the speech at will, and respond to his audience's moods and reactions.

The speech may be described in three divisions: an introduction, a body in two parts, and an appeal.

The introduction, after brief greetings and an expression of gratitude to his hosts, consisted of a reference to the topic to be discussed in the form of an answer to attacks upon him made by ex-Senator Robert L. Owen. From the beginning, he turned the "un-American" charge upon his accusers, asserting that to attack him thus maliciously in a "whispering campaign" was un-American and destructive

of American institutions. While promising to unveil the Senator's true motives, he dealt first with the ostensible charge -- that he was the tool of corrupt Tammany.

Part I of the body was a defense of his character by means of a recital of his record, showing that he had not been tainted by any practice of corrupt Tammany as Owen had charged. The record was presented in three parts:

First, the recital of his elective record sought to demonstrate his competence as a vote-getter. The recital, after a sketch of his origins and early life, followed in chronological order the offices held over a period of twenty-five years: Assemblyman, Sheriff, President of the Board of Aldermen, and four times Governor. Statistics showed the pluralities obtained and exhibited the single defeat -- in the Harding landslide -- as a popular success since he received a million more votes than his national ticket. He asserted that his nomination for the presidency was a fitting recognition of this record, calling it, in a transitional summary: "a record that nobody can dispute."

Second, the recital of his legislative accomplishments sought to demonstrate his good will, showing in particular his concern for the underprivileged. He described nine major areas in which he had acted with great success to make New York a better State than he had found it: government reorganization, the executive budget, child welfare, education, public health, water power, ballot reform, agriculture, and



appointments. These were illuminated by examples, statistics and quotations. A transitional summary asserted: "I challenge Owen . . . to . . . point to anything that he can find in it that isn't all right."

Third, reading of the testimonials sought to demonstrate his good character. These were introduced as coming voluntarily from eminent and unbiased persons. They were chosen from government, education and the church: Charles Evans Hughes, Nicholas Murray Butler, and the Reverend Howard C. Robbins. Three others appeared in the prepared manuscript--a total of six who had called him "public-spirited," "capable," "independent," and "fearless," were matched against Senator Owen's adverse opinion. "Who knows better?" he asked.

Part II, introduced by the transitional device, "Now let's get down to business," promised to be the heart of the speech. The accusation of Tammany corruption was only "a red herring," he asserted; the real issue was "nothing more nor less than my religion." Thus, at last, was unveiled the topic so often promised. It was accompanied by emotional language: "bigotry," "hatred," "intolerance," "senseless and stupid propaganda." By contrast he would speak "frankly and openly"; "intelligent debate" would bring subversive issues 'into the open.' He called to his side Jefferson, Lincoln, Cleveland, Roosevelt, American history, "our forefathers," and "Our Divine Lord."

Tacitly recognizing the relationship of the "social issues" to that of religion, he introduced and sought to refute four separate charges:

1. Religion.--He had been opposed simply because he was a Catholic. Such sheets as The Fellowship Forum were openly anti-Romanist and anti-Smith.

2. Americanism.--He had been opposed because he was not "100 per cent American." This was the usual charge of the Ku Klux Klan.

3. Appointments.--He had been accused of raising none but Catholics to high position.

4. Liquor.--He was accused of public drunkenness. These stories emanated from Kentucky and from New York, and had been published in the secular and the religious press.

He sought to refute each charge in its turn.

Since a religious test was un-constitutional, to voice it was un-American and "dangerous for the future life of the Republic."

The K. K. K. could not be democratic, for it stood contrary to the pronouncements of the founding fathers and of the Constitution.

He introduced the carefully tabulated record of his New York appointments, revealing party and religious affiliation to show that fewer Catholics had been appointed than the proportion of that faith in the population might justify.

He could not be guilty of the drunken driving charge, for he did not know how to drive.

The speaker then went on the offensive with two accusations of his own:

First.--the Drys, led by Mrs. Willebrandt, were guilty of mixing politics and religion, for she had urged Ohio Methodists to vote against him. This would be loudly decried if it had occurred among Catholic clerics, which, he asserted, it never had.

Second.--Forged papers had been distributed, pretending to urge Catholics to "stick together." He disavowed the circular.

The closing appeal.--was of three parts:

1. Neither Catholics nor Protestants should vote because of religion.
2. The "true issues," as found in the party platforms, should decide the election.
3. He expressed confidence in the success of the Party in November.

### Conclusions

[Alfred E. Smith's defeat in the contest of 1928 was long considered a ratification of the "Unwritten Law" that barred Roman Catholics from the White House, and he was cited as the classic example of a candidate who was beaten not by the strength of his opponent, but by voter prejudice.]

Recent studies have tended to modify this view, however, indicating that, in such a Republican year, it was Governor Smith's choice of Party rather than of religion which doomed his courageous attempt.

To show that the issue was not the decisive one in the election is not, however, to prove it to be without significance or without results both wide-spread and long lasting.

A. Campaign discussion of the religious issue had the following effects:

1. It stirred the nation's conscience, alerted both sides to changing conditions, and brought to open view much that had been previously hidden.

2. It strengthened the move of the ethnic minorities into the Democratic ranks. The addition of this Northern metropolitan strength relieved the Party of its dependence upon the South and facilitated the "Roosevelt Revolution" of 1932.

3. Widely represented as the decisive issue, it contributed to the unwillingness of both parties to offer a Catholic at the presidential polls for a period of 32 years.

B. The Oklahoma City speech was the high point of the campaign's involvement in religion.

1. It was the only speech of the campaign devoted to the subject.

2. It was widely broadcast, published, and reviewed.

3. It included discussion of each of the related social issues.

4. It was delivered in a city where agitation of the issue had been intense, and in a Democratic stronghold suspected of bolting the ticket.

C. The religious issue was not one but several social and moral questions, variously related to one another and to the candidate.

1. The Roman Catholic Church in American politics.--This issue had been raised by Charles C. Marshall, who, armed with Papal encyclicals and historical precedents, warned against a possible recurrence of Roman intervention in politics, a threat to American constitutional church-state relationships. On the other hand, there were the cries of bigoted hate-mongers, possessed by primitive fears, still fighting the hordes of Wallenstein by means of scurrilous tracts. Smith, a devout Catholic and former altar boy, was represented as a Vatican tool for the seizure of power in America.

2. Urbanism vs. rural living.--Country folk, for the first time a minority, feared for the passing of their way of life. They regarded the great cities as the seat of all wickedness, and were in turn regarded by urbanites as the rustic relics of a past age. Smith was reared

on the sidewalks of New York; Hoover, born in a log cabin, was presented to the electorate as the wholesome product of rural values.

3. Alien vs. native stock.--The tides of immigration that brought Europe's "tired and poor" had recently come from Catholic eastern and southern Europe. Poverty-stricken and speaking a Babel of strange tongues, these apparently unassimilable new masses tended to remain in the large northeastern cities in little Italys and Polonias which bore slight resemblance to the Anglo-Saxon Puritan life of traditional America. Smith was Irish from the Irish ghetto of lower east side Manhattan, and was known to favor immigration laws that would admit still another tide of aliens.

4. Prohibition.--The Eighteenth Amendment, with its accompanying legislation, was more than eight years old. Though it had been enacted in a wave of patriotism and self denial, it was widely evaded from the start. The temperance organizations, drawing their membership from the Evangelical churches, made Prohibition a tenet of Protestant faith, and regarded it as the campaign's chief issue. Both political Parties went on record for enforcement of dry legislation, but Al Smith openly renounced his Party's plank and proposed repeal.

5. Tammany Hall.--This New York society, the base of the city's Democratic Party organization, had, under past bosses, become a symbol of political greed and corruption. While Smith was personally above suspicion, as the product of Tammany, he was obliged to bear the onus that rested upon that organization even within his own Party.

Together, the five "social issues" formed a mass of emotional controversy which it was difficult for both the candidate and his accusers to define. Usually two or more issues were associated in any attack, for they were closely related. The immigrants were largely Catholics; they lived in the great cities; they opposed Prohibition. Tammany was Catholic, urban, "alien," and Wet. But since the American tradition and the Constitutional guarantees limited the effectiveness of the naked issue of religion, it proved expedient to the bigots to attack Smith under the guise of one of the related issues. Smith was also reluctant to speak on religion, delaying his response until the attacks could no longer be ignored, then answering temperamentally, bitterly, and on the same personal level his attackers had employed.

D. There were abundant reasons why social and moral considerations should predominate over the political and economic in 1928.

1. There was deep disillusionment over the recent entanglement in foreign conflict. Congress had decided to remain aloof from the League of Nations, and the brief participation in world affairs had, with the treaty of peace, largely come to an end.

2. The Russian Revolution and the threat of spreading Bolshevism had led many Americans to fear all that was foreign, even their own immigrant fellow citizens and their children.

3. Prosperity was at its apparent peak, and there was little desire to risk the results of change.

4. The nation was brought into emotional controversy over the Prohibition experiment and the apparent failure of its enforcement.

5. The growth of American cities, through immigration and industrialization, had brought the proportion of the nation's city dwellers to the level of its rural population. There was mutual lack of understanding between the two groups.

6. The rapid growth of the American Catholic Church in numbers and in influence had raised anew the century-old Protestant fear of the loss of its leadership if not of its very liberties to the burgeoning power of Rome.



7. The two major Party platforms in 1928 were so similar that little debate was to be expected on the ideas which they enunciated.

8. The person of Alfred E. Smith embodied many of the social issues and thrust them forcefully before the public eye as he waged a vigorous and colorful campaign.

E. Responses to the Oklahoma City speech suggest that Smith was least effective when he regarded all opposition on the social issues as anti-Catholic bigotry. While it is easy to sympathize with the embattled candidate, for this was indeed the nature of much of the attack against him, sound strategy demanded that he deal with each accusation alone and on its own merits.

1. Doubtless many persons opposed him for moral and social reasons--liquor, urban origins, Tammany corruption, or alien ways--without consideration of his religion, and therefore had grounds for complaint when he accused them of religious bigotry. This was the preponderant testimony of the newspaper criticism.

2. At Milwaukee and at Philadelphia he dealt with the Prohibition issue without reference to religion, presenting a positive proposal and a reasoned argument. While he did not convince all, yet the speech and the responses to it remained at the high level of debate he professed to desire. In October, in a speech at Tammany headquarters, he eulogized the society without mention of

religion or accusation of bigotry against its critics. It is conceivable that he could have debated the other social issues without bringing the charge of intolerance.

F. Hearer response, his own previous example, and the later practice of John Kennedy suggest that he might well have met the religion issue openly, separate from the related issues, and as early and as often as it was raised. When he answered Charles Marshall through the Atlantic Monthly, it was by means of Church documents and historical precedents, without challenging personal motives or referring to the other social issues. He was most effective when he defended the American constitutional provision for the separation of Church and State, and disclaimed the binding character of ancient Papal pronouncements to the contrary, quoting nineteenth century prelates in his defense. Though he was, in fact, echoing the near heresy of "Americanism" for which these same prelates were rebuked by Papal letter, the response revealed broad acceptance and wide-spread sympathy among tolerant persons of all faiths. The later example of John Kennedy indicates the success of this kind of defense. Speaking to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association in September, 1960, he challenged no motives, defended the Catholic right to the presidency on constitutional grounds, expressed clearly his views of church and state, quoted the same 19th century churchmen and a similar declaration by the American Bishops in 1948, and sought to reconcile disputed elements of Roman

pronouncements. The reception by his hearers, and the wide success of the filmed performance in the campaign seemingly revealed the wisdom of this approach.

G. The attacks upon Smith's record, and his defense of the record, were in reality dealing with two different "records." He was attacked for his legislative votes and his gubernatorial vetoes on moral issues; gambling, liquor, and vice control measures. His defense was of his elective and administrative accomplishments, which were well known and almost unchallenged. Though it may have served to reassure hearers regarding his good will and competence, it did not lay to rest the charges that had been brought by Ham and Straton and which would be repeated unchallenged in the Coliseum on the following night. Though it is the sense of this study that his strongest line of defense lay in a discussion of his religion per se. Yet, having chosen to discuss the related moral issues, he would have done well to meet the charges brought rather than to rehearse a record that was not under attack.

H. The campaign carried implications for the future of the issue of Roman Catholicism and the presidential office.

1. Recent studies, notably that of Ruth C. Silva, ignoring the emotionalism of the campaign and concentrating on electoral behavior, have measured the impact of the social issues, and concluded that Smith was a strong candidate running in an overwhelming Republican year. His religion and his stand on Prohibition may actually have been a help to him.

2. Speculation arose concerning a possible Smith candidacy in 1932. Had his 1928 rejection not been laid to his Catholicism, he might have been given the second chance he sought. Or, had he not run in 1928, he might have tested his Catholicism at the polls in a year not owned by the opposition. But in 1932 the depression having destroyed the Republican image, Smith's chances were too much dimmed by the previous defeat, and another Democratic star had risen -- Franklin D. Roosevelt.

3. John Kennedy was a diligent student of the Smith example and apparently learned from his experience. He was prepared to face the issue at every point that it was raised, to discuss it dispassionately and rationally. Turning it to his advantage, he appealed to the loyalty of Catholics and to the sense of fair play of Protestants -- a winning combination.

I. Smith was one of the most effective extemporaneous speakers in the history of presidential politics.

1. His hearers at Oklahoma City and elsewhere on the campaign tour testified that his platform performance was without peer.

2. The style of the verbatim speech, though more informal, is not inferior to that of the prepared manuscript.

3. Not bound to his manuscript, he maintained close contact with his hearers, shortened and lengthened his material at will, and responded to their moods and reactions.

[Alfred E. Smith, one of the most effective speakers and strongest candidates in presidential campaign history, was defeated before he began to run by issues of history and party, in which his religion played a minor but tempestuous role. Often attacked unfairly, and often misjudging the nature and magnitude of the issue, he defended himself and his right to run as a "Catholic and a patriot," not always wisely, but with unquestioned candor and courage.]

## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

TEXTUAL COMPARISON

Governor Alfred E. Smith: Presidential Campaign Speech  
Oklahoma City, September 20, 1928

The comparison is shown by means  
of the following typographical  
devices in the verbatim text:

Use of identical language . . . . . Capitalized  
Use of synonymous words or phrases . . . . . Underlined  
New material . . . . . Lower Case

PREPARED MANUSCRIPT  
CAMPAIGN TRAIN

VERBATIM REPORT  
THE NEW YORK TIMES  
September 21, 1928

Honored Governor, Mr.  
Chairman and Fellow Citizens  
of Oklahoma and adjoining  
States. (A voice: "Good.")

It would be an awful  
thing if somebody asked me to  
name them. (Laughter). I had  
all the names this afternoon  
but it is difficult to remem-  
ber. However, I am very  
grateful to you, Governor,  
and to our former Governor,  
for your very kind words of  
welcome.

I am sure I am more than  
grateful to the people of  
Oklahoma and the adjoining  
States that gave me the won-  
derful welcome that was not  
only enjoyed by myself but by  
all the members of our party  
when they arrived at the depot,  
and continued, it seemed to me,  
throughout the day.



Our country has achieved its great growth and become a model for the nations of the world under a system of party government. It would be difficult to predict what might be the evil consequences if that system were changed. If it is to survive, campaigns for the presidency must be fought out on issues really affecting the welfare and well-being and future growth of the country. In a presidential campaign there should be but two considerations before the electorate: the platform of the party, and the ability of the candidate to make it effective.

In this campaign an effort has been made to distract the attention of the electorate from these two considerations and to fasten it on malicious and un-American propaganda.

I shall tonight discuss and denounce that wicked attempt. I shall speak openly on the things about which people have been whispering to you.

OUR COUNTRY during all ITS national life HAS been successful, has grown in power and influence and has been A MODEL for GOVERNMENTS all over THE WORLD under what we have been pleased to call the PARTY system. TO SURVIVE, the party system must continue to be successful. To be successful, CAMPAIGNS MUST BE FOUGHT UPON ISSUES that have to do with THE WELFARE, the progress and the prosperity OF THE COUNTRY. (Applause) IN every national CAMPAIGN THERE are practically TWO major CONSIDERATIONS: First, THE party PLATFORM; second, THE ABILITY OF THE CANDIDATE TO MAKE that platform EFFECTIVE. (Applause.)

THIS is a rather unique CAMPAIGN because of the apparent widespread attempt TO DISTRACT the American people FROM the real issues AND TO FASTEN their minds ON un-democratic and UN-AMERICAN secret PROPAGANDA.

I propose, therefore, TO-NIGHT to take full advantage of your warm welcome, because as I looked into the faces of the people that greeted me along the line of march today, I must say that I saw no difference between them and the people of the great city or the great country-side of my own State of New York.

I propose, therefore, to take advantage of the warm welcome and DISCUSS this whole proposition in an OPEN, frank way. I propose to drag out into the open what has BEEN WHISPERED TO YOU.

A former Senator from your own State, a member of my own party, has deserted the party which honored him, upon the pretense, as he states it, that because I am a member of Tammany Hall I am not entitled to your support for the high office to which I have been nominated. Here tonight I challenge both the truth and the sincerity of that pretense. I brand it as false in fact. I denounce it as a subterfuge to cover treason to the fundamentals of Jeffersonian Democracy and of American liberty.

I want to first direct my attention to the statement printed in the Congressional Record in the form of a letter from your own FORMER SENATOR of this STATE directed to Senator Simmons. (A Voice: "He ain't ours".--laughter and applause.)

Well, listen. That may be so, that may be so. But he has raised the issue and let us adopt him for tonight, no matter what we do with him tomorrow. (Applause.)

In the course of this letter he declared to the American people through the medium of the Congressional Record, an abuse of the privilege of franking and of reading matter into the Record--he proclaimed that he opposed me BECAUSE I AM A MEMBER OF TAMMANY HALL. Now, I can understand why Republicans are against me. (Laughter.) All you have got to do is to come up to my own state and you will get abundant reason for that. I have been licking them around that State for ten years. (Loud applause.) And when I went into the Governorship first they regarded me as an accident, and freely predicted that I was only there for a short time. And I can understand that they are afraid to let me get into that White House in Washington for fear I may make as long a stay there as I did in the Executive Mansion at Albany. (Loud applause.)

What Mr. Owen personally thinks is of no account in this campaign. He has, however, raised an issue with respect to my record with which I shall deal tonight without mincing words. I know what lies behind this pretense of Senator Owen and his kind and I shall take that up later.

What he says, however, has been seized upon by the enemies of the Democratic Party and the foes of progressive government. They have thus made my record an issue in this campaign. I do not hesitate to meet that issue. My record is one of which I am justly proud and it needs no defense. It is one upon which I am justified in asking your support.

For the present, let us examine the record upon which has beaten the light of pitiless publicity for a quarter of a century. I am willing to submit it to you and to the people of this country with complete confidence.

Twenty-five years ago I began my active public career. I was then elected to the Assembly, representing the neighborhood in New York City where I was born, where my wife was born, where my five children were born and where my father

But when A MEMBER OF MY OWN PARTY, a man who for so many years was signally HONORED by the Democratic PARTY, on that flimsy pretext advises the people of his State and of his country not to vote for me, I challenge the truth and the honesty of his purpose. (Applause.) And I declare that the statement was only a cover for a TREASON against the principles of JEFFERSONIAN DEMOCRACY AND OF true, loyal AMERICANISM. (Applause.)

Now, the last thing a man cares to do is to talk about himself. I am a rather modest kind of creature. I do not like to do it. I would like to fight this campaign out on the platforms of the two parties and on THE RECORD of my opponent and upon the record of the party that espoused them; but the real issue of MY RECORD has been raised, and I will deal with it here tonight in cold, clear, plain, every-day language, so that there will be no mistake about it. And I think I can be pardoned for the assertion that I am rather PROUD OF that RECORD. I am proud of it because it was made in the pitiless sunLIGHT OF PUBLICITY, going back over A QUARTER OF A CENTURY.

Here it is: In 1903 I was first nominated as a member of THE ASSEMBLY of the legislature of the State of New York, REPRESENTING THE DISTRICT that I WAS BORN in, that MY WIFE WAS BORN in, and that MY FATHER AND MOTHER WERE BORN in.

and mother were born. I represented that district continuously for twelve years, until 1915, when I was elected Sheriff of New York county.

Two years later I was elected to the position of President of the Board of Aldermen, which is really that of vice mayor of the City of New York.

In 1918 I was selected by the delegates to the State convention as the candidate of the Democratic Party for Governor and was elected.

Running for re-election in 1920, I was defeated in the Harding landslide. However, while Mr. Harding carried the State of New York by more than 1,100,000 plurality, I was defeated, only by some 70,000 votes.

After this defeat, I returned to private life, keeping up my interest in public affairs, and accepted appointment to an important State body at the hands of the man who had defeated me.

I REPRESENTED THAT DISTRICT FOR TWELVE successive YEARS. At the end of that period I WAS ELECTED SHERIFF OF THE COUNTY OF NEW YORK. TWO YEARS LATER I WAS ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN of that city and, IN 1918, the Democratic CONVENTION, assembled in the City of Saratoga, nominated me for the office of GOVERNOR.

IN the Fall of 1918 I WAS ELECTED GOVERNOR, although in that same election the only other Democrat elected on the State ticket with me was the Lieutenant Governor, the balance of the State ticket being overwhelmingly Republican, or all Republicans, the Legislature being also in the hands of the Republicans.

IN 1920 I was renominated. The whole Eastern part of this country felt the effect of the so-called HARDING LANDSLIDE. Warren G. HARDING CARRIED THE STATE OF NEW YORK BY 1,160,000 PLURALITY. I WAS DEFEATED for Governor by ONLY 70,000 PLURALITY.

I sought retirement TO PRIVATE LIFE after a long PUBLIC career, AND, to let you into my full confidence, I had as fine a job as a man ever had. I was boss of a big trucking company. We had 2,000 horses, 480-odd automobiles and about 2,500 employees (Applause). I was enjoying the work immensely. I got an annual salary five times that of the salary of the Governor.

In 1922 the Democratic Convention, by unanimous vote, re-nominated me for the third time for Governor. I was elected by the record plurality of 387,000, and this in a State which had been normally Republican.

But IN 1922 I was unable to withstand the pressure from leaders of my party, and at the Democratic State Convention of 1922 I was unanimously NOMINATED FOR GOVERNOR FOR THE THIRD TIME. (Applause.) And in that year I WAS ELECTED BY 387,000 PLURALITY, a record plurality for the State of New York. (Applause.)

I had fully made up my mind to retire at the end of my second term. No Governor in fifty years has been elected for more than two terms.

My name was before the National Convention in Madison Square Garden. John W. Davis was nominated. The night that he was nominated, I said to him, "What can I do for you? I am a Democrat. It makes no difference to me what took place in the convention, what can I do for you?" (Applause.)

In 1924, at the earnest solicitation of the Democratic presidential candidate, I accepted renomination. The State of New York was carried by President Coolidge by close to 700,000 plurality, but I was elected Governor. On the morning after the election I found myself the only Democrat elected on the State ticket, with both houses of the Legislature over-whelmingly Republican.

And he gave me the hardest task a man could give when he asked me to again run for Governor. Upon his urging I was nominated for the fourth time IN 1924. COOLIDGE swept THE STATE OF NEW YORK by a PLURALITY of 700,000, and THE MORNING AFTER ELECTION I was standing alone as the ONLY DEMOCRAT ELECTED. (Applause.)

Renominated by the unanimous vote of the convention of 1926, I made my fifth State-wide run for the governorship and was again elected the Democratic Governor of a normally Republican State.

In 1926 again I was persuaded by the leaders to carry the banner in another State battle, and I did so, AND WAS AGAIN ELECTED. This is the reason I can come down here and greet the people of Okla-

homa after eight years AS  
GOVERNOR OF the greatest State  
in the Union. (Applause.)

Consequently, I am in a position to come before you to-night as the governor of New York finishing out his fourth term, the longest tenure of any governor in the history of the state.

The record of accomplishment under my four administrations recommended me to the Democratic Party in the nation, and I was nominated for the presidency at the Houston convention on the first ballot.

To put the picture before you completely, it is necessary for me to refer briefly to this record of accomplishment:

In the face of bitter Republican opposition, I succeeded in bringing about a reorganization of the government of the State of New York, consolidating eighty or more scattered boards, bureaus and commissions into nineteen major departments and bringing about efficiency, economy and a thorough-going coordination of all the State's activities.

Under it was set up for the first time the Cabinet of the Governor.

Now, is it not reasonable to suppose that in the ordinary course of events such a performance in the largest State of the Union, backed by a record that nobody can dispute, it would be quite natural that my name would go before the national CONVENTION and there have the distinction of being the only man NOMINATED ON THE FIRST BALLOT in twenty years, with the exception of President Wilson's second nomination in 1916.

Let me briefly lay BEFORE YOU some of the high spots of that RECORD. REORGANIZATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE STATE. The greatest piece of constructive legislation that the State has known in fifty years, started by me as far back as 1920 and brought to successful accomplishment in 1927, after battling with the Republican party in and out of the Legislature for seven years.

A drastic reform was secured in the manner and method of appropriating the public money, commonly referred to as the executive budget.

During my legislative career, as well as during my governorship, I sponsored and secured the enactment of the most forward-looking, progressive, humanitarian legislation in the interests of women and children ever passed in the history of the State. I appointed the first Commission on Child Welfare, while Speaker of the Assembly, as far back as 1913.

I had a large part in the enactment of the Workmen's Compensation Law and the rewriting of the factory code, which went as far as government possibly could to promote the welfare, the health and the comfort of the workers in the industrial establishments of our State.

I have stood behind the Department of Education with all the force and all the strength I could bring to my command.

The present Commissioner of Education is a Republican. Any one in Oklahoma, or in any other part of the United States, may write to Frank P. Graves, Department of Education, Albany, N.Y., and ask him the blunt question, "What Governor of

THE EXECUTIVE BUDGET, a modern, up-to-date METHOD of handling the PUBLIC finances, wrung from an unwilling REPUBLICAN Legislature by direct appeal to the people themselves, carrying to them the case of their business, and focusing upon a hostile Legislature a strong fire of public criticism and public opinion.

I think I can with great pride point to the longest line of constructive welfare LEGISLATION that any State in this union can boast of: The creation of boards of CHILD WELFARE; statutes for the protection of women and children in industry; THE WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION act, the most forward-looking legislation of its kind adopted in any part of this country; a FACTORY CODE that has been a marvel for every State in the union. This was all won by hard, earnest labor and endeavor. A large part of it was bitterly antagonized by the forces of reaction represented in the ranks of the Republican Legislature.

One of the most insidious, the most stupid, the most deliberate and the most willful of lies spread out in the propaganda is my attitude to the public school system. (Applause.)

THE PRESENT COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION in the State of New York is a man by the name of FRANK P. GRAVES. HE IS A REPUBLICAN. Let ANYBODY IN OKLAHOMA, OR ANY OTHER PART OF THE UNITED STATES WRITE a letter TO FRANK P. GRAVES,

that State rendered the greatest service to the cause of public education?" and I am confident he will write back a letter with my name in it.

Figures sometimes speak louder than words. In 1919, my first year in office, the State appropriated to the localities for the promotion of public education eleven and one-half million dollars. Last year, for the same purpose, I signed bills totalling \$86,000,000, an increase in appropriations for public education of seventy-four and one-half million dollars during the period of my governorship.

care of the DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION in ALBANY, AND ASK HIM THE single QUESTION: WHAT GOVERNOR OF New York has been the best friend of PUBLIC EDUCATION during your stewardship? (Applause.) And I suggest to you that when you receive a reply, you will find IN IT MY NAME. (Applause.)

WELL, SOMETIMES FIGURES SPEAK probably LOUDER THAN WORDS. Let me give you some figures, because, remember, after all, in education, like everything else, you get the degree of it that you pay for. Education must be purchased. You don't get any more than you pay for, and it is your business to see that you don't get any less. So let's see how it figures up.

IN 1919, the FIRST YEAR of my governorship, the appropriation for the Department of Education was ELEVEN AND A HALF MILLION DOLLARS.

In 1928, this YEAR, it was \$86,000,000 (applause), a difference OF \$74,500,000.

Now, there is no doubt about this statement. This is a positive public record in Albany and I could not dare make it here with the Republican National Committee listening in (Laughter), putting it down on paper word for word, looking for something to pick on, looking for something to dispute, looking for an opportunity to challenge something that Smith said in Oklahoma--I could not state it unless it is absolutely right. It is according to the record. (Applause.)



Not only did I sustain it and the department in appropriation, but every forward-looking measure, everything that strengthened the system, everything that helped the constitutional mandate of our State that there must be provided a system of free public schools for the education of our children, I fostered, urged and helped to the very last degree. (Applause.)

I have given of my time, my energy and my labor without stint to placing the Department of Public Health upon the highest level of efficiency and usefulness, to bettering the condition of the unfortunate wards of the State hospitals and institutions for the poor, the sick and the afflicted and to the development, over the opposition of a hostile Legislature, of a comprehensive, unified park system, having in mind not only present requirements but the needs and the welfare of the generations to come.

PUBLIC HEALTH: Ask the doctors of New York State. Don't ask me about it. Write to any doctor. Take any physician you like. I do not care whether he is a Democrat or Republican or a socialist. Write him a letter and ask him what he thinks my attitude has been toward the question of promoting the public health of the State of New York.

Ask him what degree of intelligence I brought to the reorganization of the Health DEPARTMENT, what degree of intelligence I brought to the rewriting of the medical code, and you will get the answer again. If they tell the truth they cannot escape it.

By my bond issue, that I debated with Republican leaders all over the State, I put the State in a position to catch up after twenty solid years of Republican neglect in the care of our institutions, our prisons, and our charity endeavors.

I organized and originated the first comprehensive State-wide system of parks and parkways that the State of New York

ever had, and I planned them and conceived them, not only for the generation today but for the years to come. And all of that against the stubborn opposition of a senseless Republican majority in both houses of the Legislature that conceived the childish notion that the way to get rid of me was not to do the things that I was asking for. (Applause.)

But they failed to take it to account that my proposals had behind them the force of public opinion, the power of public demand and the thought of the intelligent, thinking citizens of the State.

For ten years I battled against bitter Republican opposition to retain for the people of the State of New York the control of their water power, their greatest God-given resources, and have prevented their alienation and preserved them for our people and for our posterity.

WATER POWER: FOR TEN solid YEARS I have stood with my back against the wall in the face of all kinds of pressure for the preservation of the great NATURAL WATER POWER RESOURCES OF THE STATE FOR the PEOPLE to enjoy. (Applause.) While it is true that I was unable, at the hands of a hostile Legislature held body and soul, boots and breeches by the power of the trust, to be able to put over my plan, I nevertheless stopped them from giving the water powers of THE STATE over to private corporations for private profit and for private gain. (Applause.)

I sponsored legislation which brought about reform of the ballot, the passage of direct primary laws and provisions against corrupt practices in elections.

I undertook and accomplished BALLOT REFORM, the enactment OF A DIRECT PRIMARY LAW and a CORRUPT PRACTICES act, and I SIGNED the bill that gave A BONUS from THE STATE OF NEW YORK TO THE soldiers that left that State to fight for their country.

The first bill for a bonus by the State of New York to the World War veterans was signed during my administration.

Although a city man, I can say to you without fear of contradiction that I did more for agriculture and its promotion in the State of New York than any Governor in recent history. Cooperative marketing was encouraged. New impetus was given to the construction of the State highways. State aid was furnished to towns and counties to bring the farm nearer to the city, and during my terms of office, there was appropriated in excess of \$15,000,000 for the eradication of bovine tuberculosis.

The business of the State of New York was handled in a strictly business way. The number of public place holders was cut down. Appointments and promotions were made on a strictly merit basis. In consequence, there was effected a reduction in taxes to the farmer and the small home owner, from 1923 to 1928, of from two mills to one-half mill of the State's levy upon real property, together with a substantial reduction in the income tax.

AGRICULTURE: Nothing makes me smile so much as to once in a while have a fellow say, "What does Smith know about AGRICULTURE; he comes from the CITY; he would not know a farm if he saw one." (Laughter.) What a joke, what a travesty; the agricultural interests of the State of New York know I understand their problems, and in my Omaha speech of Tuesday night I think I pretty clearly indicated that I understand the agricultural problem of the West. (Applause.)

I have cooperated with them to the last degree, gave them their COOPERATIVE MARKETING associations, the CONSTRUCTION of roads, and HIGHWAYS leading to the markets, State subsidy, recommended by me as far back as 1920 for the improvement of roads to bring the farms closer to the centers of consumption.

It is a matter of fact, and is known through out THE STATE OF NEW YORK, that although it took me five or six years to do it, I placed THE BUSINESS OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK and the Government of the State of New York on a STRICTLY BUSINESS basis.

I saw to it that APPOINTMENTS AND PROMOTIONS in the public service were made for MERIT and for fitness. I moved men up in the departments from subordinate positions to the high places. My own

secretary, my personal confidential secretary, was thirty years employed in the Executive Department. I moved him up and made him Secretary to the Governor as a reward for his faithfulness and devoted service to the State and, further, because he was the best man that I could find for it. (Applause.)

Public improvements in the State, long neglected under Republican rule, are being carried out at a rate unprecedented in all its history.

Bear in mind that all this was accomplished without the cooperation of the Legislature, because during my entire career as Governor both branches of the Legislature have been Republican, except for a period of two years when one branch--the Senate--was Democratic. It was brought about because I took the issues to the people directly and brought the force of public opinion, regardless of party affiliation, to the support of these constructive measures.

You hear them talking about the cost of government of the State of New York under Smith. Well, the Republican Press Bureau of the State Committee is the busiest lie foundry that this country ever produced. (Laughter and applause.) They can turn them out there as fast as an electrically-controlled neostyle can print the copy. And all summed up it is about as complete a shower of bunk as was ever poured out upon an intelligent people. (Applause.) The fact of the matter is that with all of the public works in construction in the State of New York we have reduced TAXES to the two classes of people who feel them the most --THE SMALL HOME OWNER AND THE FARMER. (Applause.) Not only that, but by moving up the brackets in the income tax we relieved 200,000 INCOME TAX payers of any further obligation to the State of New York for its support directly from their incomes.

As I said before, ALL of THIS WAS ACCOMPLISHED in spite of a hostile LEGISLATURE, seeking every political advantage that they could--and

how? By direct appeal TO THE PEOPLE, by the plain, ordinary, homely, every-day method of coming out and talking about it and being on the level. And, incidentally this country needs some of that kind of talk. (Loud applause. A voice: "Tell it to them in Oklahoma. Straighten us out, Al.")

During my governorship I have made appointment of scores of men to public office requiring the confirmation of the Senate, and while the Senate was in control of my party in only two out of the eight years I have been Governor, not a single appointment of mine was ever rejected.

The reason for this was that I made my appointments to public office in the State of New York without regard to politics, religion or any other consideration except the ability, the integrity and the fitness of the appointee and his capacity properly to serve the State.

Contrast this with the rejection of the major appointments made by the President of the United States by a Senate of his own party.

I read in the press only recently that a Republican Congress passed four bills over the veto of the Republican President in one single day. During my entire eight years, the Legislature, hostile to me, never passed a single bill over by veto.

DURING the eight years of MY GOVERNORSHIP I APPOINTED more people TO OFFICE REQUIRING THE consent of THE STATE than PRESIDENT Coolidge appointed. I read in the paper that some of his appointments were REJECTED BY A SENATE OF HIS OWN PARTY. During my eight years the Senate of the State of New York was in control of my party only two out of the eight, and not a single appointment, NOT A SINGLE APPOINTMENT that I ever made, had to be either withdrawn or WAS REJECTED by the Senate. (Loud applause.) Now if the Republican National Committee is listening in, let them check that up. (Loud applause.)

I picked up the paper one day and I saw as a headline: "CONGRESS PASSES FOUR BILLS OVER THE VETO OF THE PRESIDENT." Congress was in control of the President's OWN PARTY.

THE LEGISLATURE as a whole was against me politically DURING the whole EIGHT YEARS I was governor and in that

EIGHT YEARS, believe me, I vetoed some thousands of bills and not a SINGLE BILL that I vetoed was ever PASSED OVER MY VETO by the Republican Legislature. (Applause.)

If you have a memorandum of the appointments, put that with it. (Applause.)

Has there been one flaw in my record, or one scandal of any kind connected with my administration that gives any meaning to this cry of Tammany rule, a cry which thousands of independent and Republican citizens of my own State treat with ridicule and contempt?

Now, let me say something to you. Up in the State of New York we have some pretty keen gentlemen in the Republican Party. (Laughter.) They are pretty smart, and they are pretty clever. Some of them have brains, some more of them have money and can hire brains. (Laughter.) And if there was anything wrong with my Administration, Senator Owen would not have to talk about it. (Laughter.)

The Republican Party will leave no stone unturned to defeat me. I have reduced their organization in the State of New York to an empty shell. At the present time, sixty millions of dollars of public improvements are in progress in my State. If there was anything wrong or out of the way, does it not strike you, as men and women of common sense, that the Republican Party in New York would leave no stone unturned to bring it to light?

Now bear this in mind. One scandal in my administration would save the Republican National Committee all the money that I believe they are using to spread through the mails this scurrilous propaganda. Tonight, while we are sitting in this auditorium, there are in force and effect in THE STATE OF NEW YORK contracts for public work to the extent of \$62,000,000.

The fact is, they have searched, and searched in vain, for the slightest evidence of improper partisanship or conduct. They found no such thing; they could find no such thing; it did not exist. And in the face of this, Senator

In 1926 the Controller of the State was a Republican. My adversary in that campaign was a man of great wealth. He had accountants and statisticians, and stenographers and what not, with neostyles and photostats. (Laughter.)

Owen and his kind have the nerve and the effrontery not to charge, but merely to insinuate, some evil which they are pleased to call Tammany rule.

They were up there for three months and they copied the records and they went over every voucher and accounted for every five-cent piece of the millions of dollars that passed through the Controller's office--\$242,000,000 this year. At the end of it all, what was there?

He couldn't find anything. He couldn't find it because it's not there. (Loud applause.)

Now, I've put into the business of the State of New York a great deal of hard, conscientious labor. And that record--if I'm to be judged at all--it is from that record that I should be judged.

One scandal connected with my administration would do more to help out the Republican National Committee in its campaign against me than all the millions of dollars now being spent by them in malicious propaganda. Unfortunately for them, they cannot find it, because the truth is it is not there. I challenge Senator Owen and all his kind to point to one single flaw upon which they can rest their case. But they won't find it. They won't try to find it, because I know what lies behind all this, and I will tell you before I sit down tonight.

And here in the State of Oklahoma I challenge Owen, anybody connected with him, any person that he can bring to his assistance, to come to Albany and go over that and point to anything that he can find in it that isn't all right. (Applause.)

I confess I take a just pride in this record. It represents years of earnest labor, conscientious effort and complete self-sacrifice to the public good in some endeavor to

show my appreciation and gratitude to the people who have so signally honored me.

Don't you think that I am entitled to ask the people of this country to believe that I would carry into the service of the nation this same devotion and energy and sacrifice which I have given in service to the State? Don't you think that my party is entitled to make this argument to the American people, because it is not only the record itself that speaks in unmistakable language for me, it is the expressed approval of the leading fellow citizens of my State, who have never had the slightest affiliation with Tammany Hall, and many of whom have been its political opponents.

My election to the governorship four times has not been accomplished merely by Democratic votes, because New York is a normally Republican State. I have been elected by the votes of the Democrats, together with the votes of tens of thousands of patriotic, intelligent citizens of all forms of political belief who have placed the welfare of the State above party consideration.

Take the statement of a man who has not supported me for the governorship, Charles Evans Hughes; a statement not made

Now do not lose sight of the fact that New York is by no means a DEMOCRATIC State. There have been only two Democratic candidates for the Presidency who have carried the State since the Civil War. One of them was Grover Cleveland, and the other was Woodrow Wilson. (Applause.)

Now, I think it might be interesting to think of what some of the people in New York say about this. I do not have to call any character witnesses for my Administration. I can state it myself (Laughter), but as a matter of interest it is well to let us hear from some of them.

CHARLES E. HUGHES, a candidate for President of the United States on the Republican ticket in 1916, Secretary of



for political purposes, but in presenting me to the Bar Association of New York City. He described me as "one who represents to us the expert in government and, I must say, a master in the science of politics."

He said of me, "the title that he holds is the proudest title that any American can hold, because it is the title to the esteem and affection of his fellow citizens."

Nicholas Murray Butler, President of Columbia University, in conferring upon me an honorary degree, stated that I was "alert, effective, public-spirited and courageous, constantly speaking the true voice of the people."

The Very Reverend Howard C. Robbins, Dean of the Episcopal Cathedral of St. John the Divine, stated that I had shown myself, "a singularly well-balanced, capable and forceful executive." He added: "He has been independent and fearless. He has had the interest of all the people of the State at heart and his sincerity and courage have won for him a nationwide recognition."

Robert Lansing, Secretary of State under President Wilson, said of me: "His public career is convincing proof that he possesses the true spirit of

State in the Harding Cabinet, former Justice of the United States Supreme Court, former Governor of the State of New York--here is what HE says about it, speaking of ME:

"ONE WHO REPRESENTS TO US THE EXPERT IN GOVERNMENT AND I MIGHT SAY A MASTER IN THE SCIENCE OF POLITICS. THE TITLE THAT HE HOLDS IS THE PROUDEST TITLE THAT ANY AMERICAN CAN HOLD, BECAUSE IT IS A TITLE TO THE ESTEEM AND AFFECTION OF HIS FELLOW-CITIZENS."

Let us see what NICHOLAS MURRAY BUTLER, PRESIDENT OF the COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY and a prominent Republican, said, Speaking about me when I had conferred upon me by that University the HONORARY DEGREE of Doctor of Laws, he said: "He is ALERT, EFFECTIVE, PUBLIC-SPIRITED AND COURAGEOUS, CONSTANTLY SPEAKING THE TRUE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE."

THE REV. HOWARD C. ROBBINS, DEAN OF THE EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE, said:

"HE IS A MAN SINGULARLY WELL BALANCED, CAPABLE AND FORCEFUL. HE HAS BEEN INDEPENDENT AND FEARLESS. HE HAS THE INTERESTS OF ALL THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE AT HEART AND HIS SINCERITY AND COURAGE HAVE WON FOR HIM A NATION-WIDE RECOGNITION."

public service, and is eminently fitted to fill with distinction and ability any office for which he might be chosen candidate."

Virginia G. Gildersleeve, Dean of Barnard College, stated that I had "made an excellent Governor and shown a knowledge of State affairs which very few of our Governors have ever possessed."

A group of distinguished educators, headed by Prof. John Dewey of Columbia University, said of my record on public education: "His whole attitude on education has been one of foresight and progress."

I could tax your patience for the rest of this evening with similar expressions from men and women who are the leaders of thought and affairs in the State of New York, independents in politics, most of them never affiliated with any political organization.

Do Senator Owen and the forces behind him know more about my record than these distinguished men and women who have watched it and studied it? But Senator Owen and his kind are not sincere. They know that this Tammany cry is an attempt to drag a red herring across the trail.

I know what lies behind all this and I shall tell you. I specifically refer to the question of my religion. Ordinarily, that word should never

Now listen, I could go on indefinitely with that. There is no end to the amount of testimonials along that line that I could produce. But what's the use? I only do it for the purpose of putting this question in your mind: Who KNOWS; THESE DISTINGUISHING citizens of New York or SENATOR OWEN? (Laughter and applause. A voice: "Keep right on.")

Now, let's get down to business. I know that I do not have to tell you, friends of mine, in this section of the country, that the cry of TAMMANY Hall is nothing more nor less than A RED HERRING that is pulled ACROSS THE TRAIL in order to throw us off the scent.

Now this has happened to me before in my State campaigns, but I did not consider it of enough importance to talk about. But it has grown to a proportion

be used in a political campaign. The necessity for using it is forced on me by Senator Owen and his kind, and I feel that at least once in this campaign, I, as the candidate of the Democratic Party, owe it to the people of this country to discuss frankly and openly with them this attempt of Senator Owen and the forces behind him to inject bigotry, hatred, intolerance and un-American sectarian division into a campaign which should be an intelligent debate of the important issues which confront the American people.

that compels me to let the country know that at least I know what's behind it; it's nothing more nor less than MY RELIGION. (Loud applause.)

I FEEL THAT I OWE IT TO THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY to talk out plainly. If I had listened to the counselors that advised political expediency, I would probably keep quiet, but I'm not by nature a quiet man. (Laughter and applause.)

I never keep anything to myself. I talk it out. And I feel I owe it, not only to the party, but I sincerely believe that I owe it to the country itself to drag this un-American propaganda out into the open. Because this country, to my way of thinking, cannot be successful if it ever divides on sectarian lines. (Applause.)

If there are any considerable number of our people that are going to listen to appeals to their passion and to their prejudice, if BIGOTRY and INTOLERANCE and their sister vices are going to succeed, it is dangerous for the future life of the Republic, and the best way to kill anything UN-AMERICAN is to drag it out into the open, because anything un-American cannot live in the sunlight. (Applause.)

In New York I would not have to discuss it. The people know me. But in view of the vast amount of literature anonymously circulated throughout this country, the cost of which must run into huge sums of money, I owe it to my

Where does all this propaganda come from? Who is paying for its distribution:

One of the women leaders of North Carolina was talking to me in the Executive Chamber in Albany about two weeks ago, and

country and my party to bring it out into the open. There is a well-founded belief that the major portion of this publication, at least, is being financed through political channels.

A recent newspaper account in the City of New York told the story of a woman who called at the Republican National headquarters in Washington, seeking some literature to distribute. She made the request that it be of a nature other than political. Those in charge of the Republican Publicity Bureau provided the lady with an automobile and she was driven to the office of a publication notorious throughout the country for its senseless, stupid, foolish attacks upon the Catholic Church and upon Catholics generally.

I can think of no greater disaster to this country than to have the voters of it divide upon religious lines. It is contrary to the spirit, not only of the Declaration of Independence, but of the Constitution itself. During all of our national life we have prided ourselves throughout the world on the declaration of the fundamental American truth that all men are created equal.

Our forefathers, in their wisdom, seeing the danger to the country of a division on religious issues, wrote into the Constitution of the United

she said: "Governor, I have some notion about the cost of distributing election material." She said: "The amount of it that has come into our State could not be printed and distributed for less than a million dollars."

Where is the money coming from? I think we got the answer the other day when A WOMAN went into THE NATIONAL Committee in Washington and meekly walked up to the man in charge and said:

"I want SOME LITERATURE on Governor Smith; I want the non-POLITICAL kind;" and he brought her downstairs, put her in AN AUTOMOBILE and took her over TO an OFFICE where a paper is published called The Fellowship Forum, which for a number of years has been engaged in this SENSELESS, FOOLISH, STUPID ATTACK UPON THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND the members of that faith. (Applause.)

States in no uncertain words the declaration that no religious test shall ever be applied for public office, and it is a sad thing in 1928, in view of the countless billions of dollars that we have poured into the cause of public education, to see some American citizens proclaiming themselves 100 per cent. American, and in the document that makes that proclamation suggesting that I be defeated for the presidency because of my religious belief.

The Grand Dragon of the Realm of Arkansas, writing to a citizen of that State, urges my defeat because I am a Catholic, and in the letter suggests to the man, who happened to be a delegate to the Democratic convention, that by voting against me he was upholding American ideals and institutions as established by our forefathers.

The Grand Dragon that thus advised a delegate to the national convention to vote against me because of my religious is a member of an order known as the Ku Klux Klan, who have the effrontery to refer to themselves as 100 per cent. Americans.

Yet totally ignorant of the history and tradition of this country and its institutions and, in the name of Americanism, they breath into the hearts and souls

Prior to the convention, THE GRAND DRAGON OF THE REALM OF ARKANSAS wrote TO one of the delegates from Arkansas, AND IN THE LETTER he advised the delegate that he would not vote for me in the national CONVENTION, and he put it on the ground of UPHOLDING AMERICAN IDEALS AND INSTITUTIONS AS ESTABLISHED BY OUR FORFATHERS.

Now can you think of any man or any group of men gathered together in what they call THE K.K.K., that profess to be 100 per cent. American, and forget the great principle that JEFFERSON stood for, the equality of man; and forget that our forefathers in their wisdom, foreseeing probably such a sight as we look at today, wrote into the fundamental law of the country that at no time was religion to be regarded as qualification for office.

Just think of a man BREATHING the spirit of HATRED against MILLIONS OF his FELLOW-citizens proclaiming himself to be an American and proclaiming and



of their members hatred of millions of their fellow countrymen because of their religious belief.

Nothing could be so out of line with the spirit of America. Nothing could be so foreign to the teachings of Jefferson. Nothing could be so contradictory of our whole history. Nothing could be so false to the teachings of our Divine Lord Himself. The world knows no greater mockery than the use of the blazing cross, the cross upon which Christ died, as a symbol to instill into the hearts of men a hatred of their brethren, while Christ preached and died for the love and brotherhood of man.

I fully appreciate that here and there, in a great country like ours, there are to be found some ignorant or misguided people and, under ordinary circumstances, it might be well to be charitable and make full and due allowance for them. But this campaign, so far advanced, discloses such activity on their part as to constitute, in my opinion, a menace not alone to the party, but to the country itself.

I would have no objection to anybody finding fault with my public record circularizing

subscribing at the same time to the doctrine of Jefferson, of Lincoln, of Roosevelt and of Wilson.

Why there is NO GREATER  
MOCKERY in this WORLD today  
~~than~~ THE burning of THE CROSS,  
the emblem of faith, the em-  
blem of salvation, the place  
upon which CHRIST Himself made  
the great sacrifice for all of  
mankind, by these people who  
are spreading this propaganda  
while the Christ that they  
are supposed to adore, love  
and venerate, during all of  
his lifetime on earth, taught  
the holy, sacred writ of  
brotherly love.

So much for him. (A voice:  
 "That is plenty.")

the whole United States, provided he would tell the truth. But no decent, right-minded, upstanding American citizen can for a moment countenance the shower of lying statements, with no basis in fact, that have been reduced to printed matter and sent broadcast through the mails of this country.

One lie widely circulated, particularly through the southern part of the country, is that during my governorship I appointed practically nobody to office but members of my own church.

Now there is another LIE, or series of lies, being carefully put out around THE COUNTRY, and it is surprising to find the number of people who seem to believe it. I would have refrained from talking about this if it were not for the avalanche of letters that have poured into the National Committee and have poured into my own office in the Executive Department at Albany asking for the facts.

And that is THE LIE that has been spread around that since I have been GOVERNOR of the State of New York NOBODY has even been APPOINTED TO OFFICE BUT Catholics. (Loud noises.)

We are losing time on the radio. Please wait.

What are the facts? On investigation I find that in the cabinet of the Governor sit fourteen men. Three of the fourteen are Catholics, ten Protestants, and one of Jewish faith. In the various bureaus and divisions of the Cabinet officers, the Governor appoints twenty-six people. Twelve of them are Catholics and fourteen of them are Protestants. Various other State officials,

THE CABINET OF THE GOVERNORSHIP is made up OF FOURTEEN MEN. THREE OF them ARE CATHOLICS, TEN of them are PROTESTANTS AND ONE OF them is a JEW. (Applause.)

Outside of the Cabinet members, THE GOVERNOR APPOINTS two boards and commissions under Cabinet, TWENTY-SIX PEOPLE. TWELVE OF THEM ARE PROTESTANTS.



making up boards and commissions, and appointed by the Governor, make a total of 157 appointments, of which thirty-five were Catholics, 106 were Protestants, twelve were Jewish, and four I could not find out about.

I have appointed a large number of judges of all our courts, as well as a large number of county officers, for the purpose of filling vacancies. They total in number 177, of which sixty-four were Catholics, ninety were Protestants, eleven were Jewish, and twelve of the officials I was unable to find anything about so far as their religion was concerned.

This is a complete answer to the false, misleading and, if I may be permitted the use of a harsher word, lying statements that have found their way through a large part of this country in the form of printed matter.

If the American people are willing to sit silently by and see large amounts of money secretly pour into false and misleading propaganda for political purposes, I repeat that I see in this not only a danger to the party, but a danger to the country.

To such depths has this insidious manner of campaign sunk, that the little children in our public schools are being made the vehicles for the carrying of false and misleading propaganda. At Cedar Rapids, Iowa, the public

Aside from that, VARIOUS OTHER STATE OFFICIALS, MAKING UP BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS, WERE APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR, MAKING A TOTAL OF 157 appointments, OF WHICH 35 WERE CATHOLICS, 106 WERE PROTESTANTS, 12 WERE JEWISH AND FOUR we were unable to FIND OUT ABOUT.

Judicial appointments, county appointments, and all positions in the various judicial and county districts of the State not directly related to the Executive Department, although appointed by the Governor to FILL VACANCIES: TOTAL NUMBER of appointments, 177; 64 CATHOLICS, 90 PROTESTANTS, 11 JEWS AND 12 that we don't know ANYTHING ABOUT. (Laughter and applause.)

That about as COMPLETELY as anything dissipates this foolish, stupid propaganda that so many well-intentioned and well-thinking people believe to be true, simply because they read it on a piece of paper.

Are THE CHILDREN of THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS free from this? Why, not at all. In certain sections of the country the little girls and boys are used as the vehicles for carrying false propaganda.

prints tell us that a number of school girls asked their parents if it were true that there would be another war if Smith was elected. When questioned by their parents as to how they came to ask such questions, one of the girls said:

We were told at school that Wilson started the war in 1917, and if Governor Smith were elected he would start another war.

As contemptible as anything could possibly be is an article on the very front page of a publication devoted to the doings of a church wherein the gospel of Christ is preached. I refer to the Ashland Avenue Baptist, a publication coming from Lexington, Ky., in which a bitter and cruel attack is made upon me personally and is so ridiculous that ordinarily no attention should be paid to it. It speaks of my driving an automobile down Broadway at the rate of fifty miles an hour, and specifically states I was driving the car myself while intoxicated.

Everybody who knows me knows full well I do not know how to drive an automobile, that I never tried it. As for the rest of the contemptible, lying statement, it is as false as this part.

On the inside of this paper, the morning worship on the following Sunday gives as the subject, "What think ye of Christ?"

Recently, in IOWA, two little GIRLS came home to their father and said: "We are going to have another war." The father said, "What do you mean?" "WHY," they said, "WE WERE TOLD AT SCHOOL THAT PRESIDENT WILSON STARTED THE LAST WAR AND IF GOVERNOR SMITH IS ELECTED HE IS GOING TO START ANOTHER WAR."

Here is one for you listen to this: ASHLAND AVENUE BAPTIST, PRINTED IN LEXINGTON, KY., ON THE FRONT PAGE OF A CHURCH PUBLICATION, in a box of heavy black type.

"Recently the papers published how Governor Smith came near to a serious accident DRIVING FIFTY MILES AN HOUR DOWN BROADWAY WHILE INTOXICATED. He WAS DRIVING THE CAR HIMSELF practicing his wet gospel."

Now, EVERYBODY that KNOWS ME KNOWS that I am unable TO operate an AUTOMOBILE. I never tried it in my life, and, what is more, I am never going to try it; and the statement that I was running the car myself down Broadway at fifty miles an hour is just as absurd as the other PART of it.

I turned that publication over and looked on the INSIDE of the sheet. I saw that on the SUNDAY following its publi-

The man or set of men responsible for the publication of that wicked libel, in my opinion, do not believe in Christ. If they profess to, they at least do not follow His teaching. If I were in their place I would be deeply concerned about what Christ might think of me.

A similar personal slander against me was dragged out into the open about a week ago when a woman in the southern part of the country read what purported to be a letter from a woman in my own State. Fortunately, the names of both women were secured. One of my friends interviewed the woman in New York State, and she promptly denied having written such a letter. The woman in the southern part of the country refused to talk about it and refused to produce the letter.

I single out these few incidents as typical of hundreds. I well know that I am not the first public man who has been

cation, at 11 o'clock in the morning, the subject of worship was to be, "WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?" (Laughter and applause.)

Now I am compelled to the observation that the man or men responsible for that libelous slander against my character cannot possibly BELIEVE IN CHRIST. (Applause.)

And if I was in his place or in their places, the day after they uttered it, the thing I WOULD BE most CONCERNED ABOUT would be, "WHAT would CHRIST THINK OF ME?" (Applause.)

A short time ago we had a repetition of it right in the State of New York. A woman in the STATE OF NEW YORK was supposed to have written TO A WOMAN in West Virginia saying that the Governor was so intoxicated at the State Fair that he had to be held up by two men while he was making a speech. (Laughter.)

I immediately dispatched the Democratic leader of Syracuse over to the lady's house. She said, "Why, Mr. Kelly, I never said anything of the kind. I wasn't at the fair the day the Governor was there. I never saw him at the fair."

We immediately dispatched somebody to the woman in Virginia and SHE REFUSED TO TALK.

Of course, THESE are just a FEW instances. I could keep this up all night. But I want to call your attention to this.

made the object of such baseless slander. It was poured forth on Grover Cleveland and upon Theodore Roosevelt, as well as upon myself. But as to me, the wicked motive of religious intolerance has driven bigots to attempt to inject these slanders into a political campaign. I here and now drag them into the open and I denounce them as a treasonable attack upon the very foundations of American liberty.

I have been told that politically it might be expedient for me to remain silent upon this subject, but so far as I am concerned no political expediency will keep me from speaking out in an endeavor to destroy these evil attacks.

There is abundant reason for believing that Republicans high in the councils of the party have countenanced a large part of this form of campaign, if they have not actually promoted it. A sin of omission is sometimes as grievous as a sin of commission. They may, through official spokesmen, disclaim as much as they please responsibility for dragging into a national campaign the question of religion, something that according to our Constitution, our history and our traditions has no part in any campaign for elective public office.

Giving them the benefit of all reasonable doubt, they at least remain silent on the exhibition that Mrs. Willebrandt made of herself before the Ohio Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church when she said:

I have a certain satisfaction, a certain comfort in it. I am not the first public man that this kind of propaganda has been thrown against. Against nobody has it been used to the degree that it is being used against me; but it was used against CLEVELAND AND ROOSEVELT.

Of course, it is very fine for the REPUBLICAN Committee and the Republican Chairman to disown all this. It is very easy for them to say, "We DISCLAIM knowledge of it AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR IT."

But I haven't heard any of them disclaim responsibility for what MRS. WILLEBRANDT said. She is a Deputy Attorney General of the United States. She went before the METHODIST CONFERENCE of Methodist preachers and SAID to them:

"There are two thousand pastors here. You have in your church more than 600,000 members of the Methodist Church in Ohio alone. That is enough to swing the election. The 600,000 have friends in other states. Write to them."

This is an extract from a speech made by her in favor of a resolution offered to the effect that the conference go on record as being unalterably opposed to the election of Governor Smith and to endorse the candidacy of Herbert Hoover, the Republican candidate.

Mrs. Willebrandt holds a place of prominence in the Republican administration in Washington; she is an Assistant Attorney General of the United States. By silence, after such a speech, the only inference one can draw is that the administration approves such political tactics. Mrs. Willebrandt is not an irresponsible person. She was Chairman of the Committee on Credentials in the Republican National Convention at Kansas City.

What would the effect be upon these same people if a prominent official of the government of the State of New York under me suggested to a gathering of the pastors of my church that they do for me what Mrs. Willebrandt suggests be done for Hoover?

"THERE ARE 600,000 OF you Methodists in Ohio alone; ENOUGH TO put this ELECTION over. WRITE to your people."

There is separation of Church and State for you!  
(Applause.)

Let me ask you in all candor and in all frankness--and you don't need to answer it except by looking at me with a smile (that's what you will have to do): WHAT WOULD be said around this country if a member of my Cabinet--if an attachee of the Democratic Administration at Albany--were to appear before a convention of Roman Catholic clerics and make that kind of a statement? (Applause.)

It needs no words of mine to impress that upon your minds. It is dishonest campaigning. It is un-American. It is out of line with the whole tradition and history of this government. And, to my way of thinking, is in itself sufficient to hold us up to the scorn of the thinking people of other nations.

One of the things, if not the meanest thing, in the campaign is a circular pretending to place someone of my faith in the position of seeking votes for me because of my Catholicism. Like everything of its kind, of course it is unsigned, and it would be impossible to trace its authorship. It reached me through a member of the Masonic order who, in turn, received it in the mail. It is false in its every line. It was designed on its very face to injure me with members of churches other than my own.

Now just another word and I am going to finish. Here is THE MEANEST THING that I have seen in THE whole CAMPAIGN. This is the produce of the lowest and most cunning mind that could train itself to do something mean or dirty.

This was sent to me by a member of the Masonic Order, a personal friend of mine. It purports to be a circular sent out under Catholic auspices to Catholic voters, and tells how "we have control in New York; stick together and we'll get control of the country."

And, designedly, it said to the roster of the Masonic Order in my State, because so many members of that order are friends of mine and have been voting for me for the last ten years, "Stand together."

Now, I disown that circular; the Democratic Party disowns it, and I have no right to talk for the Catholic Church, but I'll take a chance and say that nobody inside of the Catholic Church has been stupid enough to do a thing like that.  
(Applause.)

I here emphatically declare that I do not wish any member of my faith in any part of the United States to vote for me on any religious grounds. I want them to vote for me only when in their hearts and consciences they become convinced that my election will promote the best interests of our country.

Let me make myself perfectly clear. I DO NOT WANT ANY Catholic IN THE UNITED STATES of America TO VOTE FOR ME on the 6th of November because I am a Catholic. (Applause.)

If any Catholic in this country believes that the welfare, the well-being, the prosperity, the growth and the expansion of the United States is best conserved and best promoted by the election of Mr. Hoover, I want him to vote for Hoover and not for me. (Applause.)

By the same token, I cannot refrain from saying that any person who votes against me simply because of my religion is not, to my way of thinking, a good citizen.

But on the other hand, I have the right to say that any citizen of this country that believes I can promote its welfare, that I am capable of steering the ship of State safely through the next four years, and then VOTES AGAINST ME BECAUSE OF MY RELIGION, he is not a real, pure, genuine American. (Applause.)

Let me remind the Democrats of this country that we belong to the party of that Thomas Jefferson whose proudest boast was that he was the author of the Virginia statute for religious freedom. Let me remind the citizens of every political faith that the statute of religious freedom has become a part of the sacred heritage of our land.

The constitutional guaranty that there should be no religious test for public office is not a mere form of words. It represents the greatest

guarantee of liberty that ever was given any people.

I attack those who seek to undermine it, not only because I am a good Christian, but because I am a good American and a product of America and of American institutions. Everything I am, and everything I hope to be, I owe to those institutions.

The absolute separation of State and Church is part of the fundamental basis of our Constitution. I believe in that separation, and in all that it implies. That belief must be a part of the fundamental faith of every true American.

Let the people of this country decide this election upon the great and real issues of the campaign and upon nothing else.

For instance, you have all heard or read my Omaha speech on farm relief. Read the Democratic platform on farm relief, compare my speech and that platform plank with the platform plank of the Republican party and the attitude of Mr. Hoover, so that you may decide for yourselves which of the two parties, or the two candidates, according to their spoken declarations, are best calculated to solve the problem that is pressing the people of this country for solution. By a study of that you will be conserving the interest of the cotton growers of this State and promoting its general prosperity.

Now, instead of all this talk--and this is the last night I will devote to it--what should we be doing?

We should be debating FARM RELIEF. We should look into what I have said about it, what Hoover has said about it; what the Democratic PLATFORM says about it; what THE REPUBLICAN platform says about it, and what the record of the last eight years in Washington shows.



Take my attitude on the development of our national water power resources. Take the Democratic platform on that subject. Compare it with the Republican platform and with Mr. Hoover's attitude and record on the same subject, and find out from which of the two parties you can get and to which of the two candidates you can look forward with any degree of hope for the development of these resources under the control and ownership of the people themselves rather than their alienation for private profit and for private gain.

Compare the Democratic platform with the Republican platform and Mr. Hoover's attitude with mine on the all-important question of flood control and the conservation of our land and property in the valley of the Mississippi. Then take the record and find out from which party you got the greatest comfort and hope for a determination of that question.

Take the subject of the reorganization of the government in the interest of economy and a greater efficiency. Compare the platforms. Compare the speeches of acceptance, and be sure to look into the record of the Republican failure to carry out its promises along these lines during the last seven and a half years.

WATER POWER--the same thing.

FLOOD CONTROL--the control of the waters in the MISSISSIPPI VALLEY in the interest of the preservation, life and PROPERTY of countless millions of our citizens.

REORGANIZATION OF THE GOVERNMENT in Washington IN THE INTEREST OF ECONOMY AND GREATER EFFICIENCY.

Let this debate be held, and let us put down forever in this country this un-American, un-Christianlike doctrine that is finding its way into this campaign.

I declare it to be in the interest of the government, for its betterment, for the betterment and welfare of the people, the duty of every citizen to study the platforms of the two parties, to study the records of the candidates and to make his choice for the Presidency of the United States solely on the ground of what best promotes interest and welfare of our great republic and all its citizens.

Let us debate it on the level. Bring it out in the open, have THE RECORD consulted and THE PLATFORMS scrutinized; I am satisfied that the result on the sixth of NOVEMBER will show an overwhelming victory for the Democratic Party.  
(Prolonged applause.)

## APPENDIX B

## APPENDIX B

### CHARLES C. MARSHALL: AN OPEN LETTER TO THE HONORABLE ALFRED E. SMITH<sup>1</sup>

#### I

SIR:--

The American people take pride in viewing the progress of an American citizen from the humble estate in which his life began toward the highest office within the gift of the nation. It is for this reason that your candidacy for the Presidential nomination has stirred the enthusiasm of a great body of your fellow citizens. They know and rejoice in the hardship and the struggle which have fashioned you as a leader of men. They know your fidelity to the morality you have advocated in public and private life and to the religion you have revered; your great record of public trusts successfully and honestly discharged; your spirit of fair play, and justice even to your political opponents. Partisanship bids fair to quail before the challenge of your personality, and men who vote habitually against your party are pondering your candidacy with sincere respect; and yet -- through all this tribute there is a note of doubt, a sinister accent of interrogation, not as to intentional rectitude and moral purpose, but as to certain conceptions which your fellow citizens attribute to you as a loyal and conscientious Roman Catholic, which in their minds are irreconcilable with that Constitution which as President you must support and defend, and with the principles of civil and religious liberty on which American institutions are based.

To this consideration no word of yours, or on your behalf, has yet been addressed. Its discussion in the interests of the public weal is obviously necessary, and yet a strange reticence avoids it, often with the unjust and withering attribution of bigotry or prejudice as the unworthy motive of its introduction. Undoubtedly a large part of the public would gladly avoid a subject the discussion of which is so unhappily associated with rancor and malevolence, and yet to avoid the subject is to neglect the profoundest interests in our national welfare.

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<sup>1</sup>The Atlantic Monthly, Vol.CXXXIX, No. 4 (April, 1927), pp. 540-549.

American life has developed into a variety of religious beliefs and ethical systems, religious and non-religious, whose claims press more and more upon public attention. None of these presents a more definite philosophy or makes a more positive demand upon the attention and reason of mankind than your venerable Church, which recently at Chicago, in the greatest religious demonstration that the world has ever seen, declared her presence and her power in American life. Is not the time ripe and the occasion opportune for a declaration, if it can be made, that shall clear away all doubt as to the reconcilability of her status and her claims with American constitutional principles? With such a statement the only question as to your proud eligibility to the Presidential office would disappear, and the doubts of your fellow citizens not of the Roman Catholic Church would be instantly resolved in your favor.

The conceptions to which we refer are not superficial. They are of the very life and being of that Church, determining its status and its relation to the State, and to the great masses of men whose convictions deny them the privilege of membership in that Church. Surely the more conscientious the Roman Catholic, and the more loyal to his Church, the more sincere and unqualified should be his acceptance of such conceptions.

The conceptions have been recognized before by Roman Catholics as a potential obstacle to their participation in public office, Pope Leo XIII himself declaring, in one of his encyclical letters, that it may in some places be true that for most urgent and just reasons it is by no means expedient for (Roman) Catholics to engage in public affairs or to take an active part in politics.

It is indeed true that a loyal and conscientious Roman Catholic could and would discharge his oath of office with absolute fidelity to his moral standards. As to that in general, and as to you in particular, your fellow citizens entertain no doubt. But those moral standards differ essentially from the moral standards of all men not Roman Catholics. They are derived from the basic political doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church, asserted against repeated challenges for fifteen hundred years, that God has divided all power over men between the secular State and that Church. Thus Pope Leo XIII, in 1885, in his encyclical letter on The Christian Constitution of States, says: 'The Almighty has appointed the charge of the human race between two powers, the ecclesiastical and the civil, the one being set over divine, and the other over human things.'

The deduction is inevitable that, as all power over human affairs, not given to the State by God, is given by God to the Roman Catholic Church, no other churches or religious or ethical societies have in theory any direct power from God and are without direct divine sanction, and therefore without natural right to function on the same basis as the Roman Catholic Church in the religious and moral affairs of the State. The result is that the Church, if true to her basic political doctrine, is hopelessly committed to that intolerance that has disfigured so much of her history. This is frankly admitted by Roman Catholic authorities.

Pope Pius IX in the famous Syllabus (1864) said: 'To hold that national churches, withdrawn from the authority of the Roman Pontiff and altogether separated, can be established, is error.'

That great compendium of Roman Catholic teaching, the Catholic Encyclopedia, declares that the Roman Catholic Church 'regards dogmatic intolerance, not alone as her incontestable right, but as her sacred duty.' It is obvious that such convictions leave nothing in theory of the religious and moral rights of those who are not Roman Catholics. And, indeed, that is Roman Catholic teaching and the inevitable deduction from Roman Catholic claims, if we use the word 'rights' strictly. Other churches, other religious societies, are tolerated in the State, not by right, but by favor.

Pope Leo XIII is explicit on this point: 'The (Roman Catholic) Church, indeed, deems it unlawful to place the various forms of divine worship on the same footing as the true religion, but does not, on that account, condemn those rulers who, for the sake of securing some great good or of hindering some great evil, allow patiently custom or usage to be a kind of sanction for each kind of religion having its place in the State.'

That is, there is not a lawful equality of other religions with that of the Roman Catholic Church, but that Church will allow state authorities for political reasons -- that is, by favor, but not by right -- to tolerate other religious societies. We would ask, sir, whether such favors can be accepted in place of rights by those owning the name of freemen?

## II

Furthermore, the doctrine of the Two Powers, in effect and theory, inevitably makes the Roman Catholic Church at times sovereign and paramount over the State. It is true that in theory the doctrine assigns to the secular State jurisdiction over secular matters and to the Roman Catholic Church jurisdiction over matters of faith and morals, each jurisdiction being exclusive of the other within undisputed lines. But the universal experience of mankind has demonstrated, and reason teaches, that many questions must arise between the State and The Roman Catholic Church in respect to which it is impossible to determine to the satisfaction of both in which jurisdiction the matter at issue lies.

Here arises the irrepressible conflict. Shall the State or the Roman Catholic Church determine? The Constitution of the United States clearly ordains that the State shall determine the question. The Roman Catholic Church demands for itself the sole right to determine it, and holds that within the limits of that claim it is superior to and supreme over the State. The Catholic Encyclopedia clearly so declares: 'In case of direct contradiction, making it impossible for both jurisdictions to be exercised, the jurisdiction of the Church prevails and that of the State is excluded.' And Pope Pius IX in the Syllabus asserted: 'To say in the case of conflicting laws enacted by the Two Powers, the civil law prevails, is error.'

Extreme as such a conclusion may appear, it is inevitable in Roman Catholic philosophy. That Church by the very theory of her existence cannot yield, because what she claims as her right and her truth she claims is hers by the 'direct act of God'; in her theory, God himself directly forbids. The State cannot yield because of a great mass of citizens who are not Roman Catholics. By its constitutional law and in the nature of things, practices of religion in its opinion inconsistent with its peace and safety are unlawful; the law of its being -- the law of necessity -- forbids. If we could all concede the 'divine and exclusive' claims of the Roman Catholic Church, conflict would be eliminated; but, as it is, there is a wide consensus of opinion that those claims are false in fact and in flat conflict with the very being and order of the State.

In our constitutional order this consensus is bulwarked on the doctrine of the Supreme Court of the United States that our religious liberty and our constitutional guaranties thereof are subject to the supreme qualification that religious 'practices inconsistent with the peace and safety of the State shall not be justified.' (Watson v. Jones 13 Wall. p. 579)

The Roman Catholic Church, of course, makes no claim, and never has made any claim, to jurisdiction over matters that in her opinion are solely secular and civil. She makes the claim obviously only when the matter in question is not, in her opinion, solely secular and civil. But as determination of jurisdiction, in a conflict with the State, rests solely in her sovereign discretion, no argument is needed to show that she may in theory and effect annihilate the rights of all who are not Roman Catholics, sweeping into the jurisdiction of a single religious society the most important interests of human wellbeing. The education of youth, the institution of marriage, the international relations of the State, and its domestic peace, as we shall proceed to show, are, in certain exigencies, wrested from the jurisdiction of the State, in which all citizens share, and confined to the jurisdiction of a single religious society in which all citizens cannot share, great numbers being excluded by the barriers of religious belief. Do you, sir, regard such claims as tolerable in a republic that calls itself free?

And, in addition to all this, the exclusive powers of the Roman Catholic Church are claimed by her to be vested in and exercised by a sovereignty that is not only created therefor by the special act of God, but is foreign and extra-territorial to these United States and to all secular states. This sovereignty, by the highest Roman Catholic authority, that of Pope Leo XIII, is not only superior in theory to the sovereignty of the secular State, but is substituted upon earth in place of the authority of God himself.

We quote Pope Leo in his encyclical letter on The Christian Constitution of States: 'Over the mighty multitude of mankind, God has set rulers with power to govern, and He has willed that one of them (the Pope) should be the head of all.' We quote Pope Leo in his encyclical letter on The Reunion of Christendom: 'We who hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty.'

It follows naturally on all this that there is a conflict between authoritative Roman Catholic claims on the one side and our constitutional law and principles on the other. Pope Leo XIII says: 'It is not lawful for the State, any more than for the individual, either to disregard all religious duties or to hold in equal favor different kinds of religion.' But the Constitution of the United States declares otherwise: 'Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.'



Thus the Constitution declares the United States shall hold in equal favor different kinds of religion or no religion and the Pope declares it is not lawful to hold them in equal favor. Is there not here a quandary for that man who is at once a loyal churchman and a loyal citizen?

Pope Leo says that the Roman Catholic Church 'deems it unlawful to place the various forms of divine worship on the same footing as the true religion.' But the supreme Court of the United States says that our 'law knows no heresy and is committed to the support of no dogma, the establishment of no sect.' (Watson v. Jones 13 Wall. p. 728)

Americans indulge themselves in the felicitation that they have achieved an ideal religious situation in the United States. But Pope Leo, in his encyclical letter on Catholicity in the United States, asserts: 'It would be very erroneous to draw the conclusion that in America is to be sought the type of the most desirable status of the Church.' The modern world reposes in the comfortable reflection that the severance of Church and State has ended a long and unhappy conflict, when the same Pope calls our attention to the error of supposing 'that it would be universally lawful or expedient for State and Church to be, as in America, dissevered and divorced.'

Is our law, then, in papal theory, no law? Is it contrary to natural right? Is it in conflict with the will and fiat of Almighty God? Clearly the Supreme Court and Pope Leo are profoundly at variance. Is it not obvious that such a difference of opinion, concerning the fundamental rights between two sovereignties operating within the same territory, may, even with the best intentions and the most sensitive consciences, be fruitful of political offenses that are odious among men?

Citizens who waver in your support would ask whether, as a Roman Catholic, you accept as authoritative the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church that in case of contradiction, making it impossible for the jurisdiction of that Church and the jurisdiction of the State to agree, the jurisdiction of the Church shall prevail; whether, as statesman, you accept the teaching of the Supreme Court of the United States that, in matters of religious practices which in the opinion of the State are inconsistent with its peace and safety, the jurisdiction of the State shall prevail; and, if you accept both teachings, how you will reconcile them.

## III

At the present time no question assumes greater importance than the education of youth. The legislatures of Tennessee, of Oregon, and of Nebraska have of late laid impious hands upon it and the judiciary has sternly curbed them. From what has been said above, it is clear that the claims of the Roman Catholic Church touching this point, more than those of any other institution, may conflict with the authority of the State.

It is true that in the famous Oregon School cases the Supreme Court of the United States held a state law unconstitutional that forbade parents to educate their children at church schools of every denomination. But there was no assertion in the law that the church schools in question gave instruction inconsistent with the peace and safety of the State and there was no allegation of that tenor in the pleadings. On the record the church schools were void of offense. But, had that feature existed in the cases, it would necessarily have led to a reversal of the decision. There would have been a conflict between Church and State as to whether the instruction was inconsistent with the peace and safety of the State. The Roman Catholic Church, if true to her doctrine and dogma, would have had to assert exclusive jurisdiction over the determination of this point. Equally the State, in self-preservation, would have had to assert exclusive jurisdiction. The conflict would have been irreconcilable. What would have been the results and what the test of a sincere and conscientious Roman Catholic in executive office or on the bench?

Nothing can be clearer to the American mind than that the plain political teaching of Pope Pius IX and of Pope Leo XIII, as set forth in their encyclical letters, is inconsistent with the peace and safety of the State within the meaning of those words as used by the Supreme Court of the United States in its great decision. That it is 'not lawful for the State to hold in equal favor different kinds of religion'; that it is not universally lawful for the State and the Roman Catholic Church to be dissevered and divorced; that the various kinds of religion in theory have their place in the State, not by natural right, but by favor; that dogmatic intolerance is not alone the incontestable right of the Roman Catholic Church, but her sacred duty; that in the case of conflicting laws of the State and the Roman Catholic Church the law of that Church shall prevail, are propositions that would make up a strange textbook for the instruction of American youth.

A direct conflict between the Roman Catholic Church and the State arises on the institution of marriage, through the claim of that Church that in theory in the case of all baptized persons, quite irrespective of specific consent, Protestants and Roman Catholics alike, jurisdiction touching marriage is wrested from the State and appropriated to the Roman Catholic Church, its exercise reposing ultimately in the Pope. In Roman Catholic theory the civil contract over which the State claims jurisdiction merges in the religious sacrament of marriage, which is, as to baptized persons, exclusively within the jurisdiction of the Roman Catholic Church. Pope Pius IX in 1864 proclaimed in the famous Syllabus: 'It is error to hold that the sacrament of marriage is only a something accessory to the contract and separate from it.'

It would be generally conceded that the Roman Catholic Church--and indeed any religious society--has the natural right, in case of a question as to the validity of the marriage of a member, to determine as to whether that member may receive its sacramental ministrations and on what terms. Action by the Church would obviously relate only to the religious incidents of the civil contract and would leave untouched the civil contract over which the State claims jurisdiction. But the doctrine expressed by Pope Pius IX and the nature of the claims of his Church forbid such reasonable action. The Church proceeds in disregard of the law and sovereignty of the State, and claims, at its discretion, the right to annul and destroy the bond of the civil contract. The practical result of such claims in the conflict of Church and State appears in the light of the recent and notorious annulment of the Marlborough marriage.

The essential facts are few. It was the case of a marriage between two 'Protestants,' solemnized within the sovereignty of the State of New York, by ecclesiastics of the Episcopal Church duly authorized in the matter by the commission of that sovereignty. The parties took up their residence within the sovereignty of England. Twenty-five years after the marriage, and after the birth of two children, the wife, disregarding the remedy of annulment that existed in the law of England and in the law of New York, as well as in the Roman Catholic Church (and, if she were entitled to it at all, could have been had for the asking in either jurisdiction), sued the husband for divorce in the English courts, on the grounds of his gross misconduct. The divorce was granted. After the divorce both parties contracted civil marriages with new partners, religious marriages being difficult for them for obvious reasons. The wife's second marriage was contracted with a Roman Catholic. An annulment of the first marriage became manifestly desirable.

In the courts of New York and of England, several matters barred the way. New York had solemnized the contract under the due and usual safeguards as to the freedom of the contracting parties, and, in her sovereign right, recognized the contract as valid. England, at the request of the wife, had recognized the New York contract as valid and had taken jurisdiction over it so as to base the civil decree of divorce upon it. The parties for twenty-five years had proceeded in a course of life based on the assumption that the marriage was valid, and the wife, by her own election under the advice of able counsel, had waived all claim to annulment and had sought divorce. In the jurisprudence of every civilized country the wife was estopped from claiming annulment, by her own acts, by the lapse of time, and by the conclusive presumptions of secular law established in the interest of social morality and the sanctity of contracts. But the wife applied to the Roman Catholic authorities, who granted the annulment upon the theory that she had been under fear and duress at the time of the marriage thirty-one years before, and had not known in all that time that such fear, if it existed, established her right in the Roman Catholic court to an annulment. Disregarding facts in the case which might reflect upon the ingenuousness of the ecclesiastical court of the Sacred Rota at Rome, we would point solely to the fact that in the proceeding before that court the sovereignties of New York State and of England, and all that they had done in the matter, were ignored. The evidence at the time on the record of the English court, and conclusively against the claims of the wife, was not even produced. The decree was granted on an ex parte hearing, on the testimony of interested witnesses only. It would be difficult to find a more utter disregard of the sovereignty of States than this by the sovereignty of Rome, touching that comity which, in good morals and public decency, is supposed to exist between sovereign powers.

## V

The Mexican situation has brought the claims of the Roman Catholic Church into great prominence in this country. It is inevitably linked with issues that will concern the Executive Office at Washington for the next term. We have been very fully advised of the claims of the Church in the matter through the official opinion of that eminent jurist and Roman Catholic, Mr. William D. Guthrie, of the American Bar, prepared at the request of the Roman Catholic Hierarchy of America and extensively circulated.

Mr. Guthrie challenges the right of Mexico to enact into her constitution the provision that 'the Mexican law recognizes no juridical (that is, juristic) personality in the religious institutions known as churches.'

It must be borne in mind that this provision is not a statutory enactment of administrative law under a constitution--it is a part of the constitution itself, of the organic law legally adopted by the political sovereignty of the Mexican people, absolute and supreme in creating their constitutional conditions. The opinion claims that this provision violates international law, the principles of liberty and justice of the civilized world and of American constitutional law. If the opinion is right, then a political sovereignty, convinced that its existence is best served by the constitutional elimination of churches as juristic personalities, cannot lawfully proceed so to decree in its constitution.

Further, Mr. Guthrie maintains: 'The Roman Catholic Church is not opposing the separation of Church and State in Mexico, provided that such separation be not a sham or screen, and will leave the Church free to teach the Gospel, to educate children, and inculcate sound and true spiritual doctrine and moral rules of conduct, without dictation from or supervision by government officials, and subject to reasonable police regulation.'

The opinion proceeds upon the theory that the Roman Catholic Church should determine, in case of conflict with Mexican sovereignty, what are 'sound and true spiritual doctrine and moral rules of conduct.' The political teaching of Pope Pius IX would be regarded as sound and true by the Roman Catholic Church, but it would in reason be regarded as suicide by the autonomous Mexican State--or any other State.

Mr. Guthrie enthusiastically quotes Lord Acton: 'Where ecclesiastical authority is restricted, religious liberty is denied.' And he invokes public opinion in the United States, and international opinion generally, in a protest against the Mexican constitutional and legal situation, because, he says, it is 'in clear conflict with the basic doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church, and the deep belief of her members, that she is ecumenical and universal in the very sense and scope of the belief that all people ought to worship God, and that their Church (the Roman Catholic Church) was founded by Christ, true God and true Man, for the governance of all men living under the skies.'

The claim here asserted for the Roman Catholic Church is exclusive of every other religious foundation as having any spiritual rights under the Savior of Mankind; and it is bluntly asserted in a word that connotes a sovereign jurisdiction in theory over all men in spiritual affairs without regard to their assent. It is the last official promulgation of the ancient and dangerous theory of the Two Powers.

Americans, as well as other peoples, may deplore the Mexican standard of what is inconsistent with the peace and order of the State; but we submit that the application of the Mexican standard by the Mexican people in Mexican affairs, in the assertion of an undisputed national sovereignty within its own territory and over its own people, cannot be held contrary to season, and null and void in law, however much it may impugn the sovereign claims of the Roman Catholic Church, afford a minority a reason for rebellion, or offend the sentiments of other nations.

Mr. Guthrie's appeal opens up international questions of a grave character. He assures us that the problem of dealing with the Mexican situation 'is extremely delicate and complex'; that the Mexicans are 'resentful of foreign advice or interference, especially on our part'; that 'our treatment at times has inflamed a sensitive and proud people to intense indignation'--and so forth.

In all this may inhere a long series of unhappy international episodes. Into the complex of prejudice and resentment of a sensitive and proud people, according to Mr. Guthrie we are to project American opinion that the Mexican Constitution is intolerable because it invades the prerogatives of the ecumenical and universal Roman Catholic Church. We are, by the expression of American opinion, to invade the sovereign rights of Mexico and at the same time to register our own surrender of religious liberty de jure to the claims of that Church.

How serious might be the crises, if Mr. Guthrie's premises were to be accepted by the people of the United States, is seen in his declaration that 'many historical precedents of action on the part of the Government of the United States of America, as well as of other countries, could be cited which would abundantly support a protest or remonstrance, and even armed intervention, at the present time in Mexico, in order to assure to the Mexican people religious liberty.' Armed intervention!--and, Mr Guthrie goes on to explain, the Papacy and the Mexican Hierarchy refrain from asking for it, not because it is unlawful and unreasonable, but because 'history admonishes them of the

horrors of civil war and of the danger of inviting interference by foreign powers and arms to compel what the aggressors conceive to be either religious liberty or the only true faith.' It is clear that Washington is saved an international episode only out of considerations of expediency and policy by the Papacy and the Mexican Hierarchy.

'To this Society (the Roman Catholic Church),' wrote Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical letter on The Christian Constitution of States, 'the only begotten Son of God entrusted all the truths which He had taught in order that it might keep and guard them and with lawful authority explain them, and at the same time He commanded all nations to hear the voice of the (Roman Catholic) Church as if it were His own, threatening those who would not hear it with everlasting perdition.'

It is the voice of that Church that speaks to America by the American Hierarchy in the words of its distinguished counsel in the Mexican situation; and your fellow citizens are concerned to inquire what authority you ascribe to that voice.

## VI

We have no desire to impute to the Roman Catholic Church aught but high and sincere motives in the assertion of her claims as one of the Two Powers. Her members believe in those claims, and, so believing, it is their conscientious duty to stand for them. We are satisfied if they will but concede that those claims, unless modified and historically redressed, precipitate an inevitable conflict between the Roman Catholic Church and the American State irreconcilable with domestic peace. With two illustrations--and those relating to English Christianity--we have done.

In the sixteenth century the decree of Pope Pius V in terms deposed Elizabeth, Queen of England, from the English throne and absolved her subjects from their allegiance. The result is well known. Much that pertained to the venerable forms of religion in the preceding centuries became associated in the popular mind of England with treason--even the Mass itself when celebrated in the Roman form. Roman Catholics were oppressed in their rights and privileges. Roman Catholic priests were forbidden within the realm. The mills of God turned slowly, but they turned. The Roman Catholics of England endured the penalties of hostile legislation with heroic fortitude and resignation. Public opinion slowly changed and gradually Roman Catholic disabilities were

removed, and in 1850, under Cardinal Wiseman, the Roman Catholic Hierarchy was restored in England, with no other condition than that its sees should not use the ancient titles that the Hierarchy of the Church of England has retained. Peace and amity reigned within the realm, irrespective of different religions, and domestic repose marked a happy epoch. But the toleration and magnanimity of England bore strange fruit. Scarcely was the Roman Hierarchy restored to its ancient privileges when the astounding Apostolic Letter of Pope Leo XIII appeared (1896), declaring to the world that the orders of the Church of England were void, her priests not priests, her bishops not bishops, and her sacraments so many empty forms.

But this was not all. Reaching hands back through three centuries, the Roman Pontiff drew from obscurity the case of John Felton, an English citizen who in 1570, contrary to the law of treason at that time on the statute book of England, posted on the walls of London the decree of Pope Pius V already referred to, deposing the English Queen. Felton was beatified in 1886 by the act of Pope Leo XIII.

The honors paid him were rendered three hundred years after his treasonable act. There lies their sinister import. They are no part of the medieval milieu; they belong to the modern world and must have judgment not by medieval but by modern standards. One would have supposed, in view of the critical situation in modern States in relation to the respect for authority of government and the obedience of citizens to the law, that the beatification might have been omitted. One would have supposed that the changes in political thought and theory through three hundred years would have dictated the wisdom of letting the dead past bury its dead, and the memory of blessed John Felton rest in peace with those abandoned political doctrines that inspired his heroic but unhappy deed.

Is the record of the Roman Catholic Church in England consistent, sir, in your opinion, with the peace and safety of the State?

Nothing will be of greater satisfaction to those of your fellow citizens who hesitate in their endorsement of your candidacy because of the religious issues involved than such a disclaimer by you of the convictions here imputed, or such an exposition by others of the questions here presented, as may justly turn public opinion in your favor.

Yours with great respect,

CHARLES C. MARSHALL



## APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

ALFRED E. SMITH  
CATHOLIC AND PATRIOT: GOVERNOR SMITH REPLIES<sup>1</sup>

CHARLES C. MARSHALL, ESQ.

DEAR SIR:

In your open letter to me in the April Atlantic Monthly you 'impute' to American Catholics views which, if held by them, would leave open to question the loyalty and devotion to this country and its Constitution of more than twenty million American Catholic citizens. I am grateful to you for defining this issue in the open and for your courteous expression of the satisfaction it will bring to my fellow citizens for me to give 'a disclaimer of the convictions' thus imputed. Without mental reservation I can and do make that disclaimer. These convictions are held neither by me nor by any other American Catholic, as far as I know. Before answering the argument of your letter, however, I must dispose of one of its implications. You put your questions to me in connection with my candidacy for the office of President of the United States. My attitude with respect to that candidacy was fully stated in my last inaugural address as Governor when, on January 1, 1927, I said:--

'I have no idea what the future has in store for me. Everyone else in the United States has some notion about it except myself. No man could stand before this intelligent gathering and say that he was not receptive to the greatest position the world has to give anyone. But I can say this, that I will do nothing to achieve it except to give to the people of the State the kind and character of service that will make me deserve it.'

I should be a poor American and a poor Catholic alike if I injected religious discussion into a political campaign. Therefore I would ask you to accept this answer from me not as a candidate for any public office but as an American citizen, honored with high elective office, meeting a challenge to his patriotism and his intellectual integrity. Moreover,

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<sup>1</sup>The Atlantic Monthly, Vol. CXXXIX, No. 5 (May, 1927), pp. 721-728.

I call your attention to the fact that I am only a layman. The Atlantic Monthly describes you as 'an experienced attorney' who 'has made himself an authority upon canon law.' I am neither a lawyer nor a theologian. What knowledge of law I have was gained in the course of my long experience in the Legislature and as Chief Executive of New York State. I had no such opportunity to study theology.

My first thought was to answer you with just the faith that is in me. But I knew instinctively that your conclusions could be logically proved false. It seemed right, therefore, to take counsel with someone schooled in the Church law, from whom I learned whatever is hereafter set forth in definite answer to the theological questions you raise. I selected one whose patriotism neither you nor any other man will question. He wears upon his breast the Distinguished Service Cross of our country, its Distinguished Service Medal, the Ribbon of the Legion of Honor, and the Croix de Guerre with Palm of the French Republic. He was the Catholic Chaplain of the almost wholly Catholic 165th Regiment in the World War--Father Francis P. Duffy, now in the military service of my own State.

Taking your letter as a whole and reducing it to commonplace English, you imply that there is conflict between religious loyalty to the Catholic faith and patriotic loyalty to the United States. Everything that has actually happened to me during my long public career leads me to know that no such thing as that is true. I have taken an oath of office in this State nineteen times. Each time I swore to defend and maintain the Constitution of the United States. All of this represents a period of public service in elective office almost continuous since 1903. I have never known any conflict between my official duties and my religious belief. No such conflict could exist. Certainly the people of this State recognize no such conflict. They have testified to my devotion to public duty by electing me to the highest office within their gift four times. You yourself do me the honor, in addressing me, to refer to 'your fidelity to the morality you have advocated in public and private life and to the religion you have revered; your great record of public trusts successfully and honestly discharged.' During the years I have discharged these trusts I have been a communicant of the Roman Catholic Church. If there were conflict, I, of all men, could not have escaped it, because I have not been a silent man, but a battler for social and political reform. These battles would in their very nature disclose this conflict if there were any.

I regard public education as one of the foremost functions of government and I have supported to the last degree the State Department of Education in every effort to promote our public-school system. The largest single item of increased appropriations under my administration appears in the educational group for the support of common schools. Since 1919, when I first became Governor, this item has grown from \$9,000,000 to \$82,500,000. My aim--and I may say I have succeeded in achieving it--has been legislation for child welfare, the protection of working men, women, and children, the modernization of the State's institutions for the care of helpless or unfortunate wards, the preservation of freedom of speech and opinion against the attack of war-time hysteria, and the complete reorganization of the structure of the government of the State.

I did not struggle for these things for any single element, but in the interest of all of the eleven million people who make up the State. In all of this work I had the support of churches of all denominations. I probably know as many ecclesiastics of my Church as any other layman. During my long and active public career I never received from any of them anything except cooperation and encouragement in the full and complete discharge of my duty to the State. Moreover, I am unable to understand how anything that I was taught to believe as a Catholic could possibly be in conflict with what is good citizenship. The essence of my faith is built upon the Commandments of God. The law of the land is built upon the Commandments of God. There can be no conflict between them.

Instead of quarreling among ourselves over dogmatic principles, it would be infinitely better if we joined together in inculcating obedience to these Commandments in the hearts and minds of the youth of the country as the surest and best road to happiness on this earth and to peace in the world to come. This is the common ideal of all religions. What we need is more religion for our young people, not less; and the way to get more religion is to stop the bickering among our sects which can only have for its effect the creation of doubt in the minds of our youth as to whether or not it is necessary to pay attention to religion at all.

Then I know your imputations are false when I recall the long list of other public servants of my faith who have loyally served the State. You as a lawyer will probably agree that the office of Chief Justice of the United States is second not even to that of the President in its influence on the national development and policy. That court by its interpretation of the Federal Constitution is a check not only upon the President himself but upon Congress as well.

During one fourth of its history it has been presided over by two Catholics, Roger Brooke Taney and Edward Douglass White. No one has suggested that the official conduct of either of these men was affected by any unwarranted religious influence or that religion played with them any part other than it should play in the life of every God-fearing man.

And I know your imputations are false when I recall the tens of thousands of young Catholics who have risked and sacrificed their lives in defense of our country. These fundamentals of life could not be true unless your imputations were false.

But, wishing to meet you on your own ground, I address myself to your definite questions, against which I have thus far made only general statements. I must first call attention to the fact that you often divorce sentences from their context in such a way as to give them something other than their real meaning. I will specify. You refer to the Apostolic Letter of Pope Leo XIII as 'declaring to the world that the orders of the Church of England were void, her priests not priests,' and so forth. You say that this was the 'strange fruit' of the toleration of England to the Catholics. You imply that the Pope gratuitously issued an affront to the Anglican Church. In fact, this Apostolic Letter was an answer to a request made at the instance of priests of the Anglican Church for recognition by the Roman Catholic Church of the validity of their priestly orders. The request was based on the ground that they had been ordained in succession from the Roman Catholic priests who became the first priests of the Anglican Church. The Apostolic Letter was a mere adverse answer to this request, ruling that Anglican priests were not Roman Catholic priests, and was in no sense the gratuitous insult which you suggest it to be. It was not directed against England or citizens of that Empire.

Again, you quote from the Catholic Encyclopedia that my Church 'regards dogmatic intolerance, not alone as her incontestable right, but as her sacred duty.' And you say that these words show that Catholics are taught to be politically, socially, and intellectually intolerant of all other people. If you had read the whole of that article in the Catholic Encyclopedia, you would know that the real meaning of these words is that for Catholics alone the Church recognizes no deviation from complete acceptance of its dogma. These words are used in a chapter dealing with that subject only. The very same article in another chapter dealing with toleration toward non-Catholics contains these words: 'The intolerant man is avoided as much as possible by every

high-minded person . . . . The man who is tolerant in every emergency is alone lovable.' The phrase 'dogmatic intolerance' does not mean that Catholics are to be dogmatically intolerant of other people, but merely that inside the Catholic Church they are to be intolerant of any variance from the dogma of the Church.

Similar criticism can be made of many of your quotations. But, beyond this, by what right do you ask me to assume responsibility for every statement that may be made in any encyclical letter? As you will find in the Catholic Encyclopedia (Vol. V, p. 414), these encyclicals are not articles of our faith. The Syllabus of Pope Pius IX, which you quote on the possible conflict between Church and State, is declared by Cardinal Newman to have 'no dogmatic force.' You seem to think that Catholics must be all alike in mind and in heart, as though they had been poured into and taken out of the same mould. You have no more right to ask me to defend as part of my faith every statement coming from a prelate than I should have to ask you to accept as an article of your religious faith every statement of an Episcopal bishop, or of your political faith every statement of a President of the United States. So little are these matters of the essence of my faith that I, a devout Catholic since childhood, never heard of them until I read your letter. Nor can you quote from the canons of our faith a syllable that would make us less good citizens than non-Catholics. In fact and in truth, I have been taught the spirit of tolerance, and when you, Mr. Marshall, as a Protestant Episcopalian, join with me in saying the Lord's Prayer, we both pray, not to 'My Father,' but to 'Our Father.'

# I

Your first proposition is that Catholics believe that other religions should, in the United States, be tolerated only as a matter of favor and that there should be an established church. You may find some dream of an ideal of a Catholic State, having no relation whatever to actuality, somewhere described. But, voicing the best Catholic thought on this subject, Dr. John A. Ryan, Professor of Moral Theology at the Catholic University of America, writes in The State and the Church of the encyclical of Pope Leo XIII, quoted by you.--

'In practice, however, the foregoing propositions have full application only to the completely Catholic State. . . . The propositions of Pope Pius IX condemning the toleration of non-Catholic sects do not now, say Father Pohle, "apply even to Spain or the South American republics,

to say nothing of countries possessing a greatly mixed population." He lays down the following general rule: "When several religions have firmly established themselves and taken root in the same territory, nothing else remains for the State than to exercise tolerance towards them all, or, as conditions exist to-day, to make complete religious liberty for individual and religious bodies a principle of government." '

That is good Americanism and good Catholicism. And Father Pohle, one of the great writers of the Catholic Church, says further:--

"If religious freedom has been accepted and sworn to as a fundamental law in a constitution, the obligation to show this tolerance is binding in conscience.'

The American prelates of our Church stoutly defend our constitutional declaration of equality of all religions before the law. Cardinal O'Connell has said: "Thus to every American citizen has come the blessed inheritance of civil, political, and religious liberty safe-guarded by the American Constitution . . . the right to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience.'

Archbishop Ireland has said: 'The Constitution of the United States reads: "Congress shall make no laws respecting the free exercise thereof." It was a great leap forward on the part of the new nation towards personal liberty and the consecration of the rights of conscience.'

Archbishop Dowling, referring to any conceivable union of Church and State, says: 'So many conditions for its accomplishment are lacking in every government of the world that the thesis may well be relegated to the limbo of defunct controversies.'

I think you have taken your thesis from this limbo of defunct controversies.

Archbishop Ireland again said: 'Religious freedom is the basic life of America, the cement running through all its walls and battlements, the safeguard of its peace and prosperity. Violate religious freedom against Catholics, our swords are at once unsheathed. Violate it in favor of Catholics, against non-Catholics, no less readily do they leap from the scabbard.'

Cardinal Gibbons has said: 'American Catholics rejoice in our separation of Church and State, and I can conceive no combination of circumstances likely to arise which would make a union desirable to either Church or

State . . . . For ourselves we thank God that we live in America, "in this happy country of ours," to quote Mr. Roosevelt, where "religion and liberty are natural allies."

And referring particularly to your quotation from Pope Pius IX, Dr. Ryan, in The State and the Church, says: 'Pope Pius IX did not intend to declare that separation is always unadvisable, for he had more than once expressed his satisfaction with the arrangement obtaining in the United States.'

With these great Catholics I stand squarely in support of the provisions of the Constitution which guarantee religious freedom and equality.

## II

I come now to the speculation with which theorists have played for generations as to the respective functions of Church and State. You claim that the Roman Catholic Church holds that, if conflict arises, the Church must prevail over the State. You write as though there were some Catholic authority or tribunal to decide with respect to such conflict. Of course there is no such thing. As Dr. Ryan writes: 'The Catholic doctrine concedes, nay, maintains, that the State is coordinate with the Church and, equally independent and supreme in its own distinct sphere.'

What is the Protestant position? The Articles of Religion of your Protestant Episcopal Church (XXXVII) declare: 'The Power of the Civil Magistrate extendeth to all men, as well Clergy as Laity, in all things temporal; but hath no authority in things purely spiritual.'

Your Church, just as mine, is voicing the injunction of our common Saviour to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's.

What is this conflict about which you talk? It may exist in some lands which do not guarantee religious freedom. But in the wildest dreams of your imagination you cannot conjure up a possible conflict between religious principle and political duty in the United States, except on the unthinkable hypothesis that some law were to be passed which violated the common morality of all God-fearing men. And if you can conjure up such a conflict, how would a Protestant resolve it? Obviously by the dictates of his conscience. That is exactly what a Catholic would do. There is no



ecclesiastical tribunal which would have the slightest claim upon the obedience of Catholic communicants in the resolution of such a conflict. As Cardinal Gibbons said of the supposition that 'the Pope were to issue commands in purely civil matters':--

'He would be offending not only against civil society, but against God, and violating an authority as truly from God as his own. Any Catholic who clearly recognized this would not be bound to obey the Pope; or rather his conscience would bind him absolutely to disobey, because with Catholics conscience is the supreme law which under no circumstances can we ever lawfully disobey.'

Archbishop Ireland said: 'To priest, to Bishop, or to Pope (I am willing to consider the hypothesis) who should attempt to rule in matters civil and political, to influence the citizen beyond the range of their own orbit of jurisdiction that are the things to God, the answer is quickly made: "Back to your sphere of rights and duties, back to the things of God."'

Bishop England, referring to our Constitution, said: 'Let the Pope and the Cardinals and all the powers of the Catholic world united make the least encroachment on that Constitution, we will protect it with our lives. Summon a General Council--let that Council interfere in the mode of our electing but an assistant to a turnkey of a prison--we deny the right, we reject the usurpation.'

Our Supreme Court has marked out the spheres of influence of Church and State in a case from which you quote copiously, Watson v. Jones, 13 Wall. 729; but you refrain from quoting this statement:--

'The right to organize voluntary religious associations, to assist in the expression and dissemination of any religious doctrine, and to create tribunals for the decision of controverted questions of faith within the association, and for the ecclesiastical government of all of the individual members, the congregation and officers within the general association, is unquestioned . . . . It is of the essence of these religious unions and of their right to establish tribunals for the decision of questions arising among themselves that those decisions could be binding in all cases of ecclesiastical cognizance, subject only to such appeal as the organism itself provides for.'

That is the State's attitude toward the Church. Archbishop Ireland thus puts the Church's attitude toward the State:--

'To the Catholic obedience to law is a religious obligation, binding in God's name the conscience of the citizen . . . . Both Americanism and Catholicism bow to the sway of personal conscience.'

Under our system of government the electorate entrusts to its officers of every faith the solemn duty of action according to the dictates of conscience. I may fairly refer once more to my own record to support these truths. No man, cleric or lay, has ever directly or indirectly attempted to exercise Church influence on my administration of any office I have ever held, nor asked me to show special favor to Catholics or exercise discrimination against non-Catholics.

It is a well-known fact that I have made all of my appointments to public office on the basis of merit and have never asked any man about his religious belief. In the first month of this year there gathered in the Capital at Albany the first Governor's cabinet that ever sat in this State. It was composed, under my appointment, of two Catholics, thirteen Protestants, and one Jew. The man closest to me in the administration of the government of the State of New York is he who bears the title of Assistant to the Governor. He had been connected with the Governor's office for thirty years, in subordinate capacities, until I promoted him to the position which makes him the sharer with me of my every thought and hope and ambition in the administration of the State. He is a Protestant, a Republican, and a thirty-second-degree Mason. In my public life I have exemplified that complete separation of Church from State which is the faith of American Catholics to-day.

### III

I next come to education. You admit that the Supreme Court guaranteed to Catholics the right to maintain their parochial schools; and you ask me whether they would have so ruled if it had been shown that children in parochial schools were taught that the State should show discrimination between religious, that Protestants should be recognized only as a matter of favor, that they should be intolerant to non-Catholics, and that the laws of the State could be flouted on the grounds of the imaginary conflict. My summary answer is: I and all my children went to a parochial school. I never heard of any such stuff being taught or of anybody who claimed that it was. That any group of Catholics would teach it is unthinkable.

## IV

You then challenge the action of the Rota in annulling the Marlborough marriage. You suggest that the Rota by annulling the marriage (where the civil courts recognized it, but granted only a divorce) is interfering with the civil jurisdiction. That might be so if anybody claimed that the decree of the Rota had any effect under the laws of America, or any other nation of the world. But you must know that it has no such effect and that nobody claims it has. The decree merely defined the status of the parties as communicants of the Church. Your Church refuses to recognize the ecclesiastical validity of divorces granted by the civil tribunals. Your Church has its tribunals to administer its laws for the government of its members as communicants of your Church. But their decrees have no bearing upon the status of your members as citizens of the United States. There is no difference in that respect between your tribunals and the Rota.

## V

Finally you come to Mexico. By inference from the brief of a distinguished lawyer you intimate that it is the purpose of organized Catholics to seek intervention by the United States. Now I never read Mr. Guthrie's brief. I do not have to read it to reply to you, because the Pastoral Letter of the Catholic Episcopate of the United States in unmistakable words disclaimed any such intention. I do not see how, with complete candor, you could write to me about Mexico without quoting the following from that Pastoral letter:--

'What, therefore, we have written is no call on the faithful here or elsewhere to purely human action. It is no interposition of our influence either as Bishops or as citizens to reach those who possess political power anywhere on earth, and least of all in our own country, to the end that they should intervene with armed force in the internal affairs of Mexico for the protection of the Church. Our duty is done when, by telling the story, we sound a warning to Christian civilization that its foundations are again being attacked and undermined. For the rest, God will bring His will to pass in His own good time and in His own good way.'

My personal attitude, wholly consistent with that of my Church, is that I believe in peace on earth, good will to men, and that no country has a right to interfere in the internal affairs of any other country. I recognize the right

of no church to ask armed intervention by this country in the affairs of another, merely for the defense of the rights of a church. But I do recognize the propriety of Church action to request the good offices of this country to help the oppressed of any land, as those good offices have been so often used for the protection of Protestant missionaries in the Orient and the persecuted Jews of eastern Europe.

## VI

I summarize my creed as an American Catholic. I believe in the worship of God according to the faith and practice of the Roman Catholic Church. I recognize no power in the institutions of my Church to interfere with the operations of the Constitution of the United States or the enforcement of the law of the land. I believe in absolute freedom of conscience for all men and in equality of all churches, all sects, and all beliefs before the law as a matter of right and not as a matter of favor. I believe in the absolute separation of Church and State and in the strict enforcement of the provisions of the Constitution that Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. I believe that no tribunal of any church has any power to make any decree of any force in the law of the land, other than to establish the status of its own communicants within its own church. I believe in the support of the public school as one of the corner stones of American liberty. I believe in the right of every parent to choose whether his child shall be educated in the public school or in a religious school supported by those of his own faith. I believe in the principle of noninterference by this country in the internal affairs of other nations and that we should stand steadfastly against any such interference by whomsoever it may be urged. And I believe in the common brotherhood of man under the common fatherhood of God.

In this spirit I join with fellow Americans of all creeds in a fervent prayer that never again in this land will any public servant be challenged because of the faith in which he has tried to walk humbly with his God.

Very truly yours,

ALFRED E. SMITH

APPENDIX D

HANDWRITTEN SPEECH NOTES  
AND KU KLUX KLAN LETTER



## ② Career 1903 to 1928

Born in dist

Longest Tenure of any Gov. in history

Record of accomplishment  
Nat Convention

to lay before you record.

Re Org of Govt-

Ex Budget

Welfar Leg.

Child

"

Workman's Comp  
Factor Code

Education

Grass

figures louder than words

1919 = 11 1/2 Million

1928 = 86 "

74 1/2 min

Put Health

Bond issues (Rep neglect)

Parks future

### ③ State Power

Ballot reform + direct primaries

Corrupt practices

State Bonus soldiers

Apprentices

Cooperative marketing

good records

State subsidizing towns

Business handling of bus affairs

appts on merit basis

Reduction in taxation

Public Inqts

in spite of Rep legislation

issues to people

apptos confirmed by Senate

Voters

No flaw or scandal in administration

Gov Miller

Wills Rep Conf 1926

Rep not commit worse fraud



④ Challenges Over  
have work & conscience effort

---

forget it if I need Pres  
greatness

My Rep state

What people in My Secy

Hughes #1  
etc # 2

Org of Tammam is need leaving  
what lies behind "Religion"

necessity - forced on me by the Queen  
over it to the party & the people  
attempt Psych - taken intolerant  
manner next decision

---

When does propaganda come from  
Rep Pub. Paula Worrell  
Kd. town

⑤ Division on Religion... Lines

Dec 5 Ind

Constitution

Krantz Program #3

Makes allowance for unguided  
people but

on his app'ts to offices

facts Cabinet ④ Pages 5-

Dept heads " 9

Other officials " 12

Judicial + Co Offs last page

Children in Public Schools

#5

Ashland Am Baptist #6

Syracuse slander

Just a few Rosent. + Cleveland

① Expedient political to  
remain silent

---

Rep responsibility -

---

Mrs Wallerstein (#7)  
What is she saying?  
- What about Catholics  
(State official)

---

Meanest thing #8  
Vote for me or against me

Jefferson - Relg freedom  
Cons. guarantee

decide on <sup>me:</sup> issues

farm Relief

Water power

flood Control

Rail & Govt

strong platform & record  
no fear of result

OFFICE OF THE  
GRANDTELEPHONES 4-2148  
AND  
L.D. 103

112 1/2 E SEVENTH ST.

## REALM OF ARKANSAS

POST OFFICE BOX 68

LITTLE ROCK

June 1, 1948.

Mr. Z. L. Carroll

Walnut Ridge, Ark.

My Dear Mr. Carroll:

You have been selected as a delegate to the Democratic National Convention which meets in Houston, Texas on June 16th.

The outcome of this Convention will depend upon the settlement of the following issues:

Wet	vs.	Dry
Romanism	vs.	Protestantism
Nullification of law	vs.	Respect for law

I do not know what your personal views are with regard to these issues. I have every reason to believe, however, that you are a thorough-going American citizen and as such you will give your support in the Convention to the upholding of American ideals and institutions as established by our forefathers.

A delegate to a National Convention of this kind fills a position of responsibility to his constituency. A delegate is expected to represent his constituency and vote accordingly, regardless of private or personal opinions with regard to the issues in question. A delegate failing to do this will be called to account by his constituency.

I do not know what your views are with regard to the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan but regardless of your views the fact remains that an overwhelming majority of the Klansmen of Arkansas are Democratic electors and are, therefore, the constituency of the delegates who have been chosen to represent the rank and file of the Democratic voters of Arkansas in the selection of a nominee for President of the United States. The Klansmen of Arkansas are opposed to the nomination of Governor Smith for reasons well known to everyone who is in favor of good Government.

You of course know that you are representative of the rank and file of the Democracy of this State. We are hoping and believing that you will be faithful to the trust and guard and safe-

*100% American  
reaction to  
our own loss  
of power*

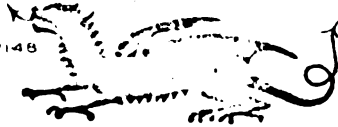
*W. H. Smith*

*W. H. Smith*

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AND  
L.D. 83



1124 F SEVENTH ST.

REALM OF ARKANSAS

POST OFFICE BOX 68

LITTLE ROCK

Page 12.

ly preserve the party and protect the interests of our Government,  
and we think that both can be best preserved by rendering your  
influence against Al. Smith.

With best wishes, I remain

Cordially yours,

*Jas. A. Corning*  
GRAND DRAGON.

JAC:ABG



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