

The Catholic Record.

Published Weekly at 184 and 486 Richmond street, London, Ontario.

Price of subscription—\$2.00 per annum.

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Messrs. LUKY, KRIS, JOHN NICH, P. J. NIXON and M. C. O'DONNELL are fully authorized to receive subscriptions and transact all other business for the CATHOLIC RECORD.

Rates of Advertising—Ten cents per line each insertion, agate measurement.

Approved and recommended by the Archbishops of Toronto, Kingston, Ottawa, and St. Boniface, and the Bishops of London, Hamilton and Peterboro, and the clergy throughout the Dominion.

Correspondence intended for publication, as well as that having reference to business, should be directed to the proprietor, and must reach London not later than Tuesday morning.

Articles must be paid in full before the paper can be stopped.

London, Saturday, January 2, 1892.

THE CIRCUMCISION: NEW YEAR'S DAY.

The feast of the Circumcision of our Lord was instituted by the Church to commemorate the fulfillment of that ordinance of the Old Law whereby it was commanded that every male child should be circumcised as a memorial of the covenant which Almighty God had made with His people, not only through Moses, but centuries before the time of Moses, for it was enacted as a law to Abraham that he and his children should observe this rite, which was further ordered to be fulfilled on the eighth day after the birth of the child. It is therefore said in the gospel: "And after eight days were accomplished that the child should be circumcised, his name was called Jesus, which was called by the Angel before he was conceived in the womb." (St. Luke, ii, 21.)

Thus not only are we reminded by this festival that Jesus was obedient to the law of which he was the Master, and that we should take from Him the example of obedience, but we are also made to know that He is truly our Saviour and Redeemer, since to Him the specially appropriate name of Jesus, or Saviour, is given because His purpose on earth is to "save his people from their sins" and to deliver them from the power of Satan, "to redeem them that were under the law" and that we may all receive adoption as sons of God.

Circumcision was a painful ceremony, and as it was the means of remission of sin, through which it is believed that original sin was forgiven under the old dispensation, it is clear that Christ was not subject to the law; but it was His will to humble Himself thus that He might make manifest His love for us and His compassion for our miseries, and that He might induce us to make a return to Him of love for love.

This festival occurs on the first day of the New Year, and besides its ecclesiastical name it is also called New Year's day. It is a day on which we should with great propriety make strong resolutions, not to be lightly broken, to spend the coming year well. The blessings of grace and temporal as well as spiritual prosperity which God has accorded to us during the past year should make us duly thankful to Him for favors so great. During the past year Almighty God has been peculiarly bountiful to this country in granting us a rich harvest, a blessing of which some other countries have been deprived. While in Russia and elsewhere millions are on the verge of starvation, Canada is prosperous and happy.

For so great a favor our gratitude to God should be manifested by greater zeal in His service than we have hitherto shown; by more exact obedience to the laws of God and of His Church, and by greater attention to all the duties of our holy religion.

There is no duty more incumbent on mankind than that of thanksgiving, and no vice for which we always profess greater horror than the vice of ingratitude. We should therefore resolve at the beginning of this new year to put into practical form our gratitude to God for benefits received, by the due performance of those duties which we have above indicated; and, further, as another form in which we should manifest our gratitude for favors bestowed upon us by God, we should show mercy to those to whom God wishes: we should be merciful to His poor.

Of the poor Christ says: "they are always with you." They are with us always that we may have an opportunity of showing our love and gratitude to God, through our bounty to them; and we are assured by Christ that He will accept our bounty to the poor as so much good done to Himself.

The beginning of a New Year is also an appropriate time for the forgiveness of injuries, a time when it customary among Christians to wish each other every happiness. Let all resolve

to begin the New Year in this way so pleasing to the great Master in whose footsteps we should walk.

In conclusion, we wish our readers without exception all prosperity and A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR.

THE ST. CATHARINES SABBATH CONTROVERSY.

We had occasion in an article which appeared in the RECORD of the 7th November to make some comments upon a discussion which was being carried on in the columns of the St. Catharines Standard on the "Scriptural Sabbath." Mr. J. Broom, whom we presume to be a "Seventh Day Baptist" minister, or a minister of some other of the indescribable thousand or so obscure sects to which Protestantism has given birth, chanced to be one of the parties engaged in the controversy, which had its origin from a sermon preached by Rev. Solomon Cleaver, of St. Paul street Methodist church of the same city.

The Rev. Mr. Cleaver in his sermon endeavored to show from Holy Scripture, what can never be positively proved from Scripture alone, that the Christian Lord's day, or the Sunday, has been properly instituted to take the place of the Jewish Sabbath, which was and is still kept on Saturday. Mr. Broom attacks this position, and maintains that the Jewish Sabbath is still to be kept—or, as he prefers to state the case, the Sabbath which Almighty God established and sanctified in Eden.

We showed in our previous article on this subject that Protestantism in all its shapes is entirely inconsistent with itself. Those who substitute the Sunday for the Jewish Sabbath do so solely on the authority of the Catholic Church, while they proclaim the sole authority of Scripture, which, as they maintain, contains all that Christians are bound to believe and practice; while even those who, like Mr. Broom, adhere to the Jewish Sabbath, just as readily as the others change the divine commandment as to the manner in which it is to be observed.

Our attention was called only a few days ago to a letter addressed by Mr. Broom to the St. Catharines Standard, in which that gentleman takes the CATHOLIC RECORD to task for its position on the subject. He makes a great flourish of trumpets while endeavoring to make it appear that of all the Christians who have lived since the Church of Christ was instituted, the Seventh-Day Baptists alone understand God's institution of the Sabbath.

It is not our purpose to enter upon a controversy with Rev. Mr. Broom. We shall allow him and the other Protestant clergymen who are engaged in discussing the matter to settle their divergencies among themselves according to their discordant private fancies; but before stating for the benefit of our readers the grounds on which the Catholic Church has instituted the Lord's day as the weekly Christian day of rest, we shall say a few words on Mr. Broom's letter of Nov. 12, inasmuch as they bear upon the subject we propose to treat.

Mr. Broom says: "I emphatically deny that the Sabbath of the fourth (third) commandment is a Jewish institution, for it was instituted at Eden thousands of years before ever a Jew was in existence. In the second place I emphatically deny that there is any command within the two lids of the Bible forbidding a Jew or any one else from lighting a fire on the Sabbath or from preparing food on the Sabbath in any country under the sun, where it becomes necessary. Will any one tell us that the Jews in Palestine, from the time of the overthrow of Jericho to that of Christ, lit no fires in that country on the Sabbath day? Absurdity! The prohibition to fire-lighting on the Sabbath was exclusively limited to climates where such was unnecessary, save for the purpose of food-cooking, applying also to portions of the warm season in cold climates, where fires can be dispensed with without physically endangering the inhabitants."

This introduction of a gloss which is not found in Scripture is surely a notable specimen of self-contradiction, self-conceit and effrontery for a gentleman who asserts as an incontrovertible principle the doctrine which Mr. Broom himself dogmatically lays down in the same letter, as follows: "Sin is a transgression of the law of God, and where there is no law there is no transgression. So then to change one jot or tittle of God's law would be to make sin righteousness and righteousness sin, an angel from heaven to the contrary notwithstanding."

We pointed out that the Seventh-Day Baptists are equally inconsistent with other Protestants who on the authority of the Catholic Church—an authority which they otherwise reject—keep the Sunday holy instead of the Jewish Saturday Sabbath. The se-

Baptists freely light fires and cook their food on Sunday, in spite of the commandments given to the Jews (Ex. xvi, 16; xxxv., 3.):

"You shall kindle no fire in any of your habitations on the Sabbath day." "To-morrow is rest of the Sabbath sanctified to the Lord. Whatever work is to be done do it; and the meats that are to be dressed, dress them: and whatsoever shall remain, lay it up until the morning."

In consequence of these laws the man who was found "gathering sticks on the Sabbath day" was condemned: "Let that man die, let all the multitude stone him without the camp." (Num. xv., 32, 35.)

Mr. Broom attempts to explain this away by constructing a new law to suit his own fancy; but the fact remains that his sect do not observe the Jewish law any better than those whom he condemns for its non-observance. It does not change the matter in the least that God instituted the Sabbath in Eden in the first instance. It is right to remark, however, that in the divine decree, whereby it was first instituted in Eden, there is not a particle of evidence that the manner in which the day was to be sanctified by man was the same as that which was afterwards made obligatory on the Jews, as Mr. Broom wishes us to believe. That gentleman's emphatic denial, therefore, does not in the least destroy the fact that the Saturday Sabbath as a day of rest for men, and the manner of its observance, are a Jewish institution.

We maintain that the Jewish ceremonial laws are not obligatory on Christians. Mr. Broom maintains that the Sabbath is no part of the Jewish ceremonial law, and he declares that if one text of Scripture be adduced to show that this is the case he will go to Rome on a pilgrimage and will, "before the bared toe" of the Pope, "swear allegiance to the Roman See."

This nonsense would be just as appropriate if Mr. Broom were to call upon us to prove from Scripture that there are mountains in the moon. We know by other means than Scripture that such mountains exist; and so by the ordinances of the Church of Christ we know what day Christians should keep holy. We also proved in our former article that Protestants practically admit that the Church established by Christ has authority to make laws on this subject. This is also proved by many testimonials of Scripture, and the Seventh-Day Baptists admit this just as their brethren do, by their adoption in part of the Christian tradition on the subject. This was the tenor of our argument in our article of Nov. 7, and our inference is inevitable that they should admit the authority of the perpetual Church in all things, which authority exists and can exist only in the Catholic Church. There is no need of an appeal to the Scripture on the subject. The authority of the Church is sufficient, for the "Church of the living God is the pillar and ground of truth," against which "the gates of hell shall not prevail." (1 Tim. iii, 15; St. Matt. xvi, 18.) Our former article on the present subject was not intended as a complete essay on the weekly Christian festival of the Lord's day, as our object was merely to show that even Protestants are obliged to have recourse to the Catholic Church to justify their own practices. So fully did we establish this that neither Mr. Broom nor others who have treated the subject in the Standard have weakened our position in the smallest degree. Mr. Broom, indeed, has acknowledged in his letters that the (Roman) Catholic Church made the change which all Protestants, except the few thousands of Seventh-Day Baptists who are in existence, unhesitatingly adopt.

But there is in the same issue of the Standard in which Mr. B's letter appears, also a letter from Mr. Angers to the effect that "the change from the seventh day of the week started with the Apostles themselves and grew into a law of the Christian Church before the Church, since called the Roman Catholic Church, even began to have a distinctive character."

Mr. Angers in this passage shows that his ideas on the subject are inextricably confused. The name of the perpetual Church of Christ is "Catholic." It is not at all usual to call her "Roman Catholic," but she is Roman inasmuch as her chief pastor, the successor of St. Peter, resides in Rome. But as a distinctive term the word Roman is unnecessary. There is but one Catholic Church, and the term Roman Catholic has been applied to that one Church chiefly by Protestant Governments which were unwilling to recognize her by her true title.

The Catholic Church of the fourth century was that of which St. Optatus spoke when he said: "We have proved that to be the Catholic Church, which is spread in the whole universe." But that same Father of the Church added: "You cannot deny that in the City of Rome on Peter first was an episcopal Church conferred, in which sat the head of all the Apostles, Peter, in which one chair unity might be preserved by all."

He then gives a list of all the Popes who succeeded St. Peter down to Siricius, "who is at this day associated with us, with whom the whole world is in accordance with us in the one bond of communion by the intercourse of letters of peace."

Elsewhere he says: "Whence then is it that you strive to usurp unto yourselves the keys of the kingdom of heaven, you who sacrilegiously fight against the chair of Peter, by your presumption and audacity?"

These words tell as powerfully against the Anglican Church, to which Mr. Angers evidently adheres, as against the heretics against whom St. Optatus directs them, and the Catholic Church of his day is evidently identical with the Catholic or Roman Catholic Church of to-day, as it is identical with the Church of St. Irenaeus who, like St. Optatus, gave a list of St. Peter's successors to his date, 170 A. D., and said: "With this (Roman) Church, on account of a more powerful principality, it is necessary that every Church, that is those who are faithful everywhere agree, in which (Church) always by those who are on every side, has been preserved the tradition which is from the Apostles."

We shall reserve for a future issue the further consideration of the Church's reasons for the institution of the Sunday as the Christians' weekly festival. But we should give Mr. Broom the opportunity he desires to make his penitential pilgrimage to Rome for the purpose of "kissing the Pope's bare toe." Possibly the Pope will so far depart from his usual practice as to bare his toe for Mr. Broom's special accommodation, so that the latter may be able to keep his very solemn oath. We shall, therefore, quote two Scriptural texts which show that the Jewish Sabbath pertains to the Jewish ceremonial laws which were abolished. One is from Gal. iv, 9, 10. Here the Apostle reprimands the converts from Judaism who desired to serve again "the weak and needy elements," among which he enumerates their observance of "days and months and times and years," evidently referring to the festivals of the Old Law.

In Col. ii, 16, 17, the same Apostle enumerates several ordinances of the Old Law which have passed away: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of a festival day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is Christ's."

These texts have always been understood in the Church of Christ as signifying the abolition of the Jewish ceremonial laws, but that abolition was known to the early Church by tradition from the apostles as well, and there is no point better established than that the first Christians maintained that the Jewish ceremonial laws are not binding under the Christian dispensation.

We must, therefore, decline to admit that the little sect known as "Seventh Day Baptists" is the sole depositary of Christian truth. This sect, as far as we can ascertain with certainty, first saw the light in England during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, but it has almost, if not entirely, disappeared there, and it exists now in any strength only in the United States, where it has a membership of less than 10,000 persons. Is this the whole progress Christianity has made in nearly nineteen centuries? Is this the result of the commission which Christ gave to His Apostles to teach all nations? If this be the case, surely the infidels have good reason to assert that Christianity has failed in its purpose: "In thy seed," that is to say, in Christ, "all nations shall be blessed." But as we do not accept this consequence, neither do we believe this sect to be the one true Christian Church.

We wish to remind our subscribers that there is necessarily a heavy expense incurred in conducting a Catholic newspaper. Beside the cost of materials, and the wear and tear of our necessary outfit, we have to pay a large amount for our staff which is necessary for the making up of the RECORD every week as the best Catholic journal in the Dominion. Some of our subscribers seem to forget this, and we have on our list a large number

who are delinquent in the payment of their subscriptions. We hope that at the beginning of this new year every subscriber who has not already paid up his subscription will do so at once, and thus make the New Year a happy one for the CATHOLIC RECORD.

THE SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST.

Our readers will have remarked by recent journals that there has been much complaint among those to whom Catholicity is a bugbear, that the Catholic religion is making so much progress in Massachusetts and other New England States as to seriously alarm the Know-Nothing element. The Fultons and Mrs. Sheppards of Boston, and the Committee of One Hundred who, in the same city, have laid out for themselves the task of destroying the Catholic Church, discovered to their horror that though the Catholics of the city do not quite constitute half of the population, there is a larger number of Catholic than of non-Catholic children, and this brings prospect that within a very few years their plans for the destruction of Catholicism must be scattered to the winds.

The facts are not to be gainsayed, for they have been proved by reliable statistics; but hitherto the fanatics of whom we have spoken have supposed that they were to be accounted for by a greater prolificness among Catholic families; but why such a condition of affairs should exist has been to them a matter of perplexity.

The Rev. B. D. Sinclair, the pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Newburyport, Mass., has recently created quite a sensation by his revelation of the causes which are at work bringing about this state of affairs which has produced so much alarm.

Mr. Sinclair has told his people plainly that the secret of the matter lies in the fact that the non-Catholics are addicted to a vice which is practically unknown among Catholics, "the crowning sin of infanticide." He has at heart the welfare of his people, and he wishes to correct the enormous evil which he recognizes as being the cause why the race of Protestant New Englanders is dying out.

Mr. Sinclair's fellow preachers are not pleased with his plain declaration of unpalatable facts. They have been accustomed to conceal the crimes which they know to be too common among their people, because the latter will not endure to be told of them; but Mr. Sinclair's purpose is to correct the evil, and his honesty is a reproach to those who have made a compromise with vice by agreeing to shut their eyes to its existence. Hence the indignation they are manifesting against him.

These are the men whom Mr. Talmage described in one of his lectures on the condition of New York: "I have as much amusement as any man of my profession can afford to indulge in at any one time in seeing some of the clerical 'reformers' of this day mount their war-charges, dig in their spurs, and with glittering lance dash down upon the iniquities of cities that have been three or four thousand years dead. These men will corner an old sinner of twenty or thirty centuries ago, and scalp him, and hang him, and cut him to pieces and then say: Oh what great things have been done! With amazing prowess they throw sulphur at Sodom, and fire at Gomorrah, and worms at Herod and pitch Jezabel over the wall. . . . but they are afraid of the libertines and the men in their Churches who drink too much, and who grind the poor."

Mr. Sinclair is evidently of the opinion that the vices of to-day are the things to be reformed, and not those of twenty or thirty centuries ago, and accordingly he has been carrying on a vigorous crusade against the prevailing vices of his own and the neighboring States. He says: "The prevention of offspring is pre-eminently the sin of this city and of New England; and if it be not checked it will sooner or later end in an irretrievable calamity. I believe that this sin is sapping the life-blood of the pure religion of New England, and until this scan of sin be weeded out of the Israel of the Church, you may expect nothing else but a continued decay of holiness and Christian living."

He then adjures the women of all ranks of society to desist from a vice the practice of which will bring upon the country a curse which must result in its ruin. To the Catholic Church, however, he pays this tribute: "The Roman Catholic Church is the one Church in New England which is a practical foe to this hell-born sin which has fastened its fangs and deadly venom into the heart of marriage."

Continuing, he declares that the majority of New Englanders pretend to be horrified at the thought that Roman Catholics are in a fair way to

dominate New England. To this he says: "Through your sin they are, and they ought to. There is in God's Providence a law of evolution by which the fittest survive and the weakest become extinct. When we find, therefore, the native New Englanders defeating the end for which marriage has been instituted, and the Roman Catholic Irish and French populations obeying God's law in rearing families, we are simply reading God's law of evolution, the survival of the fittest."

It appears from Mr. Sinclair's revelations that the Fultons and others who have been conducting the Bostonian crusade against the Catholic Church would have been more profitably employed in converting their own flocks from their Hindoo-like courses, condemned by Rev. Mr. Sinclair, than in the declamations against Jesuit aggression, which is their whole stock in trade.

THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT AND THE CHURCH.

It has become known that the action of the French Government in publishing the decree forbidding the French Bishops to leave their dioceses without permission of the Government was taken in consequence of a request from Signor Rudini, the Italian Premier, that some such measure should be adopted; the purpose being to put a stop to the manifestations of devotedness for the Holy See by French workmen; and the French Government, in order to manifest even more friendship than Italy demanded, went so far as to command the Bishops not to leave their dioceses without permission.

Very properly the Archbishop of Aix declared that he would not be bound by such a decree. It is a natural right of man that his liberty of action should not be restrained by the State except from the commission of some gross outrage upon the rights of others, or in punishment for gross neglect of duty on his own part, in matters over which the State has control, or for the prevention of such outrages. None of these reasons had existence in the present instance, and the Government in issuing the decree violated natural justice and unjustly held up the Bishops before the gaze of the world as transgressors of the law.

The decree was all the more unjustifiable and contemptible in its spirit, inasmuch as it was done at the instigation, if not quite at the dictation, of a foreign power which has of late shown marked hostility to France, and because it occurred in a Republic which professes to be based upon the broad principle of the equal rights of all its subjects.

The pilgrims, at the head of whom Monseigneur Gouthe-Soulard visited Rome, were undeniably well-conducted. The foolish freak of one boy among ten thousand visitors, a freak to which not even a particle of guilt can be attached, was no fair pretext for the Government to impose a restrictive law upon the Bishops of the Church. The Archbishop, therefore, simply maintained his rights as a man, and as a French citizen, by his bold declaration that he would not obey such a law. This was the fault for which he was subsequently fined three thousand francs. By prosecuting him the Government has shown that it is not worthy of the title Republican which it so proudly claims.

It will be remembered that after Mazzini's attempt on the life of Napoleon III., the conspirator escaped to England, and his extradition was demanded by the Emperor, who claimed that, by the comity of nations, an attempt at assassination was sufficient reason for the extradition of the criminal. The British Government considered that it was in honor bound to protect a refugee, even though a criminal, who had placed himself under its protection, and Mazzini was unpunished though his guilt was certain. There is a national dignity which a great nation considers itself under obligation to preserve, and though Mazzini was really a cut-throat in intention, as a foreigner, seeking an asylum under the flag of England, England would have gone to war rather than disgrace herself by delivering him up to those who sought his life, even by legal methods.

This was carrying the national sense of honor very far—too far, we think; yet in the case of the French Bishops we have the example of a Republican Government inflicting on its own subjects a punishment for the trivial fault of the boy whom they could not control, simply because the Italian Government asked that some restraint should be placed upon French visitors to Rome who desired to pay their respects to the Holy See,

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