

The Catholic Record.

"Christianus mihi nomen est, Catholicus vero Cognomen."—(Christian is my Name, but Catholic my Surname).—St. Pacian, 4th Century.

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NEGROES IN COUNCIL.

The National Afro-American Council of the United States, a semi-political body which has assumed the charge of watching over the interests of the colored population, is the most recent body which has taken to itself authority to institute religious festivals and fast days, and to command special religious services. This Council has appointed Friday, June 2, a day of fasting and prayer to be observed by all of the negro race. It also enjoins on all colored ministers to devote the sunrise hour of Sunday, June 4, to prayer to God to protect the negroes of the country, and to avenge as He sees fit the wrongs which have been inflicted on the negro race. There is some shadow of excuse for the Government of the country to request the observance of a religious festival of humiliation or thanksgiving, as there is no religious authority which would be universally acknowledged in a country where sects are so numerous; but it is surely rather presumptuous for a self-constituted association or club like the Afro-American Council to take this authority to itself. Protestantism denies the authority of the Church of Christ to institute religious festivals, but it admits that authority in every individual or association which thinks it proper to assume it of its own accord.

THE SAMOAN WAR.

From far away New South Wales the news comes that the iniquitous warfare now being carried on by the United States and British warships at Samoa against the natives, the particulars of which we gave in our columns two weeks ago, has been vehemently denounced by His Eminence Cardinal Patrick Francis Moran, Archbishop of Sydney, in a speech which he delivered in reference to Samoan affairs.

His Eminence said that the "fighting now going on on the island is not warfare, but deliberate murder, worse than the Armenian atrocities."

The Cardinal's language is not a whit too strong under the circumstances. The Turkish Sultan had the excuse for his atrocities in Armenia that the Christians were growing so numerous that the power of their Turkish masters was being menaced by their rapid increase, and it was necessary to exterminate most of them in order to keep the rest under subjection; but the atrocity in Samoa has not even this lame excuse. The Samoans are acknowledged by both the allied powers to be an independent people with the right to choose their own king, yet it is because they exercised their right, and did not choose the king that suited the American and British commanders, that their villages have been bombarded and burned, and the people slaughtered with all the appliances of modern warfare. Was it for such a purpose as this that the alliance between the two great "Anglo-Saxon" nations has been so earnestly advocated during the past year? The ostensible motive was to carry the blessings of civilization to savage nations, and to Christianize them! But now the first use to which this alliance has been put has been to civilize a few thousand poor and harmless savages, who have been already Christianized, by exterminating them. It does not appear, either, that the two nations who have formed an alliance for this ignoble purpose will reap any profit out of the transaction, but they have succeeded in angering Germany, and raising a war-cloud in Europe. It is not to be expected, however, that Germany will go to war for the sake of protecting the Samoans; but neither will the prestige of Great Britain and the United States be increased by their deeds among the Fijians, even if they gain "glorious victories" over them.

The whole trouble has been submitted to three Commissioners who will meet in Samoa to consider the matter, unanimity being required in the ultimate decision. These Commissioners represent the three Governments respectively, viz., Great Britain, the United States, and Germany, and we may lay it down as probable that the agreement will be reached to let the Samoans govern themselves in their

own way. If this course had been taken in the first instance the present inglorious war would not have broken out at all.

A CATHOLIC LIBERAL CONVENTION.

We very willingly published last week the circular sent us by the Executive Committee of the Catholic Liberals of Toronto, calling a Convention of Catholic Liberals of Ontario to meet in Toronto on Tuesday, the 23rd inst., for the announced purpose of "discussing the political disabilities under which our people are laboring."

It is unfortunately too true that the Catholics of this Province have not been recognized by the Government to the extent to which they are entitled in proportion to their numbers, and we wish well to the efforts of our co-religionists of either political party to have this inequality removed. We have no doubt of the sincerity of the gentlemen who are promoting the present movement, and we wish them every success.

As regards the position of the CATHOLIC RECORD in reference to the movement we have this to say: This is avowedly a movement of Catholics of the Liberal Party. There is, perhaps, a justification for the movers therein to confine the present Convention to Catholic Liberals, as it has for long been the general policy of successive Governments of both parties to appoint only their partisans to offices in their gift, and only Liberals may expect to share the spoils at present; but the CATHOLIC RECORD has always kept itself aloof from mere party politics, and it cannot now identify itself with one party rather than the other. The invitation now extended is for Catholic Liberals only, and it is to be presumed that only the interests of Catholic Liberals will be taken into consideration at the Convention. We cannot, therefore, enter with much heartiness upon a course which would imply that the interests of Catholic Conservatives are to be overlooked. Our clientele consists of the whole Catholic body, Conservatives and Liberals alike. We, therefore, leave it to Catholic Liberals of the various constituencies to decide what part they will take in the present movement.

CALVIN AS A PERSECUTOR.

A writer in the Montreal Witness of May 3 takes exception to a very mild censure passed upon John Calvin at a ministerial banquet held recently at Montreal, presided over by Bishop Bond. The Rev. Mr. Lafleur said: "Servetus was burned by an order signed by Calvin. The one act of Calvin's life which he regretted was the act of taking life."

Mr. T. Fenwick, of Woodbridge, Ont., hereupon rushes in to Calvin's defence, which he makes in the following manner:

"Dr. W. Lindsay Alexander, a distinguished Congregational minister says of him: Calvin has been much censured, not to say vituperated, for his share in this unhappy transaction (the death of Servetus). Of these allegations (against Calvin) not one can be proved, and some are undoubtedly false."

This is a very lame defence of the Geneva Reformer, whose bloodthirstiness was manifested by numerous executions for conscience' sake, and not by a single one. It was avowedly Calvin's aim to bring Geneva under a code of "severe and stern virtue," and on account of his tyranny he was expelled from the city in 1538. He was again restored to authority in 1541, and his power was then absolute. Even a disrespectful word said of him was punished by imprisonment at the least. In 1548, Ameaux, a member of the consultative Council of twenty five, was imprisoned merely on suspicion of having spoken disrespectfully of Calvin. Gruet was executed by order of Calvin for having used menacing words to which Calvin provoked him by his abusive language. Michael Servetus and Gentilis were alike found guilty of heresy in regard to the Trinity, and were executed in 1553 and 1566 respectively, the former by fire, and the latter by beheading. Berthiller was also burned for a similar fault.

Melancthon, another of this first Reformers, expressly approved the treatment of Servetus in a letter written to Calvin. He wrote:

"I have read your writing wherein you lucidly refute the horrid blasphemies of Servetus. . . . The Church will always owe you gratitude. I agree with your judgment, and maintain that your magistrates

acted justly in condemning the blasphemer to death.

Mr. Fenwick's "distinguished Congregational minister" is evidently astray in his appreciation of Calvin and his mild character; and the Rev. Mr. Lafleur might have uttered a much stronger condemnation of the Reformers' tyranny.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT.

We have received from Mr. O'Brien J. Atkinson, a prominent and highly respected lawyer of Port Huron, Michigan, the following communication, urging strongly the commutation of the sentence of the unfortunate convict known as "Peg Leg Brown" who is now in a condemned cell awaiting the extreme penalty of the law for the awful crime of murder.

Mr. Atkinson takes the ground that to inflict the death penalty on a criminal is wrong, and a sin. On this point we must disagree with him, and we, therefore, cannot accede to his suggestion or request that we should put ourselves forward as leaders in a movement to agitate for a commutation of sentence in the present case.

The right of inflicting the death penalty upon grievous offenders undoubtedly belongs to lawfully constituted society. An individual whose life is attacked unjustly is justified in defending himself even so far as to kill the unjust aggressor, if that be necessary for self protection, and the natural moral law implanted in the souls of mankind impels us to the same conclusion, as likewise to the conclusion that society has the right to protect itself to the same extent when unjustly attacked.

All mankind has acted upon this principle of morals, and it is just to conclude that it is a principle of natural law implanted in man by our Creator.

The crime of murder is one of the worst forms which an attack upon the existence of society can take, and it is, therefore, the right of the lawfully constituted supreme authority in society to inflict the death penalty on those who have been guilty of this crime, not as an act of mere revenge, but in self-defence, and as a terror to evil-doers, and to deter them from the commission of this crime; and the same may be said of some other crimes.

This principle is sanctioned by God Himself, who, under the Old Law given to the Jewish people, appointed that: "He that striketh a man with a will to kill him shall be put to death. But he that did not lie in wait for him. . . . I will appoint a place to which he must flee. If a man kill his neighbor on set purpose, and by lying in wait for him, thou shalt take him away from My altar, that he may die" (Exod. xxi.).

Mr. Atkinson says: "Capital punishment in every form is a crime, and in proof of this quotes the commandment 'Thou shalt not kill.' It is evident that this commandment is the general law, which admits of the exceptions of which we have spoken, when the laws of the land prescribe the death penalty for certain very grievous crimes. It is, of course, unlawful for private individuals to inflict this penalty, or to kill, except in the case when this is the only way in which they can protect themselves against a very serious and unjust aggressor."

The case of the forgiveness of the criminal woman by our Lord is also referred to by Mr. Atkinson. This was an act of clemency extended, probably, in consideration of the penitence of the guilty one, and as a manifestation of the Divine mercy; but even in this case our Divine Saviour does not condemn the law by which the people were about to inflict punishment. As the law was of divine institution, He could not disapprove of it or declare it to be a criminal act to put it into effect.

St. Paul says: "Rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil." Elsewhere we are told that the king beareth not the sword in vain. The sword, which implies and signifies capital punishment, is a terror to evil-doers.

MR. O'BRIEN J. ATKINSON'S LETTER.
Port Huron, Mich., May 3, 1899.
Mr. Thomas Coffey, London Ont.:
Dear Sir—I was passing through London about six weeks ago, and received the morning papers announcing the conviction of "Peg Leg Brown" for murder, and that he was sentenced to be hung, May 17th, inst. I have no idea how you feel on the subject of Capital Punishment, but this is a great opportunity for a religious journal to impress itself by denouncing the barbarous practice as a sin—a national sin calling for divine displeasure and sure to bring sorrow upon any country which inflicts it.

I understand that "Peg Leg Brown" has been guilty of murder in Texas, and that if he were free in Canada, he would be taken down to that savage jurisdiction and executed without much ceremony, so that your com-

munity has a double opportunity for good by imprisoning the poor creature, and thus preventing the law civilization of Texas from glutting its vengeance upon him, and you have also the opportunity of protecting him from the hungry hangman of the province. As "Peg Leg Brown" is an outcast and an established criminal without friends or influence, and as society has provided no "City of Refuge" for such isolated creatures, this is a rare opportunity for you to admit all damaging facts, and still denounce the crime society may commit in taking his life, and if you can succeed in doing for him what the Almighty did for Cain by excluding him from the humanizing associations, and shutting him away from this Eden to which his birth-right entitled him, you will be following a divine example and will confer a lasting benefit upon your Dominion.

Capital Punishment in every form is a crime—a violation of the commandment which was spoken from the clouds, traced upon the rock, addressed to nations as well as individuals, and which says, "Thou shalt not kill," and the modern maxim which tells us, "When sentencing a criminal remember the wretched cripple, and that your influence may be such that his sentence may be commuted, and if you think well, you may publish this letter from one of your friends."

Yours respectfully,
O'Brien J. Atkinson.

RITUALISTIC EVASIONS.

Bishop Seymour, the Protestant Episcopal Bishop of Springfield, has a letter in a recent issue of the New York Tribune in which he maintains the teaching of the Ritualists in regard to the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and the Confessional to be in accord with the formularies of the Church—"our Church," he has it, so that he maintains this not only as regards the Church of England, but also in regard to the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States.

Regarding the Confessional he says: "With the Church of Rome confession is obligatory; no one can receive the Sacrament of the body and blood of Christ unless he has previously made his confession to a priest. With us, it is to be feared, the compulsion is in the opposite direction. The ignorance and prejudice on the subject are so great that men will not go to confession themselves, nor allow others who wish to go to attend. The priests (Episcopalian ministers) who hear confessions are made objects of suspicion and given an evil name; and those who feel the need of confession for their soul's health are often held up to ridicule and even persecuted."

The term "compulsory confession" has been made a great bugbear since the pronouncement of the Archbishop of Canterbury approving voluntary or spontaneous confession, while condemning compulsory confession as said to be used in the Catholic Church. This is evidently a misuse of words. Confession is certainly not compulsory with Catholics. It is obligatory; and the obligation arises out of its very nature. Those who have invented the expression "compulsory confession" admit that through confession sin is forgiven. They admit that the priests of the true Church have power from Christ to forgive or retain sins, and that confession is the medium whereby this twofold power is exercised. Now from these premises it follows that confession is obligatory, as the sinner is bound to reconcile himself to Almighty God as soon as possible, that he may not continue to be God's enemy. As confession is the ordinary means of reconciliation, its obligation follows as a matter of course, and the theory of voluntary confession is inconsistent with itself. High Churchism is thus seen to be untenable even from its own principles.

Bishop Seymour further says in regard to the use of the word Mass: "It is innocent of all objection, saves the association with Rome, and that most soon wear away if we persistently appropriate it and use it. Mass is imbedded in our common speech already. It is familiar in our ears in Christmas, Candlemas, etc. In the West it must naturalize itself readily, because it is a monosyllable, and the West loves to make everything as short as possible."

There is another objection to the use of the word Mass by Ritualists. The Mass is the continual sacrifice of the New Law, and can be offered up only by real priests, by which name the Ritualistic clergy have no right to call themselves, as they lack ordination to the Catholic priesthood.

The Bishop is likewise careful to note that the belief of the Ritualists, or as he calls them, "the advanced Catholic party of the English Church," do not hold the "metaphysical doctrine of the Church of Rome, commonly called transubstantiation." This is a mere subterfuge of the Ritualistic party. The Lutheran doctrine of consubstantiation as believed by the Ritualists was invented merely as an evasion of the Catholic teaching, and was adopted by the Ritualists so that they might be able to take the test oath prescribed by English law to the effect that Transubstantiation as taught by the Church of Rome is idolatry. Consubstantiation is not sustained either by the words of Holy Scripture, or by the traditions of the Church as manifested by the testimony of the Fathers.

TALK WITH A PARSON.

Parson. "Contrary to the Scriptures, you deny men the right of searching and interpreting the Scriptures in the light of every man's conscience."

The Church does not deny the right to search the Scriptures, but she forbids her members to read corrupt and vicious translations. That she has always done and will continue to do, as the guardian of revealed truth. Nor does the Church forbid one to read the Scriptures in the light of one's conscience. She teaches and insists that everything a man does he should do in the light of his conscience, and that under no circumstances whatever should he act against that light, for such an act is always a sin. What the Church condemns is the claim—false in itself and destructive of revelation—that private judgment on the written word is the criterion of revealed truth; in other words, that every man has the right to read the Bible and judge for himself. Even the State, actuated by common sense and experience, does not permit the citizen or subject to read the laws of the land and judge or interpret them for himself. This is absolutely necessary to avoid social chaos or anarchy. All laws to be living and operative must have an interpreter and administrator, and that interpreter and administrator is never the individual subject of the law. If an interpreter is necessary in the State to give the law voice and application, it is equally necessary in religion. It is a disregard of this common sense principle that has produced religious chaos in the Protestant world. The Bible is a book of revealed truths, principles and laws. It is to concretize Christianity what constitutions and laws are to the State, and as the latter are not subject to private judgment, neither is the former. And as there must be a supreme court of interpretation in the secular State, there must be a supreme court of interpretation in concrete Christianity. While denying this necessity in principle, the Protestant sects recognize it in practice, for each has a central body or court before which the individual may be cited and judged, and approved or condemned. The private judgment which they concede as a right is in practice a Dead Sea apple—attractive to look at, but full of bitterness and disappointment. The individual who is attracted by a concession so flattering to his vanity and egotism is very promptly told on entering a denomination that he must believe the creed of the sect or get out. And that is precisely what the Catholic Church does in reference to her dogmas of faith. The difference is that the Catholic Church deals fairly with the individual, professes what she practices and practices what she professes, while the sects hold out a false promise and profess what in practice they repudiate.

Parson. "You deny men the right of searching and interpreting the Scriptures" * * * in violation of Jesus' command to "search the Scriptures"—John, 5:39.

We deny that our Lord ever made a law or command that every one should search the Scriptures; or that He ever commanded or authorized every one to interpret the Scriptures according to the dictates of his private judgment. In this case, as in many others, you think you see in a text what is not in it. Parson. "Does not John 5:39 prove that all were commanded to search the Scriptures?"

No, it does not, as we shall see before we are done with it. The text—verses 39 and 40—in your King James Bible is as follows: "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they who testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."

This is the text as it appeared in your Bible when it was first published in 1611. But the Protestant scholars of the English-speaking world who made a revision of the King James Bible in 1881 corrected this text, and instead of "Search the Scriptures," they made it read, "Ye search the Scriptures," thus changing it from a command to a mere statement of fact. You have, therefore, the authority of the latest modern Protestant biblical scholarship that there is no command in the text you referred to with so much confidence.

This is enough to close this point so far as you are concerned. But there are other things to be said about it.

(1) If you read the whole of Chapter V, you will see that our Lord was speaking to those Jews who persecuted Jesus and sought to slay Him—the Scribes and Pharisees. In reasoning with them to convince them of His mission He appealed to the books which they recognized as authority; and—if we suppose for the moment that He commanded them—He said, "Search the Scriptures," consult those very books whose authority ye recognize, and in which ye think ye have eternal life, for they testify of Me. The supposed command here given is clearly a particular argumentative appeal, and was addressed exclusively to those Scribes and Pharisees who, He knew, were conspiring to kill Him. If, then, we were to grant—which we do not—that He told those conspirators to search the Scriptures, the command does not announce a general law or principle; for after saying to them, "Search the Scriptures," He adds, "and ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life."

That is all the searching the Scriptures did for them. It is worthy of note that He did not tell His own beloved disciples to search the Scriptures. If you, Parson, allow yourself to be counted among those murderous conspirators and deadly enemies of Christ, you may claim that the command was addressed to you. But as we think you do not desire to be so classified we cannot see what that text has to do with you.

(2) Instead of the text being an argument for private interpretation, it is a strong argument against it. For when our Lord told them to consult their Scriptures He told them also what they should find therein, namely, evidence of His Messiahship. It was because He knew that, using their private interpretation, they would not find it, that He added, "And ye will not come to Me that ye might have life." There is nothing here to encourage private interpretation.

Pause, Parson, and reflect for a few prayerful moments on the remarkable fact that there to whom our Lord said "Search the Scriptures" were those to whom He said, "And ye will not come to Me."

Taking the text as corrected by Protestant scholars it reads thus: "Ye search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life."

The argument, then, of our Lord to the Scribes and Pharisees—who were learned in their Scriptures—was this: Why do you not believe in Me? You search your Scriptures, for you think in them you have eternal life. Those same Scriptures testify of Me. Why, then, do you not believe in Me? I will tell you the reason. "I know you, that you have not the love of God in you." (Verses 42)—N. Y. Freeman's Journal.

DR. RAINSFORD'S VERDICT.

When the Church with the wisdom of centuries, and particularly by divine direction, insists upon the necessity of religious instruction, some of her careless and indifferent children look upon her as interfering and troubling herself and them about trifles.

Like many other blinded parents they defy the secular school system and hesitate at no sacrifice—even the eternal welfare of their children for its altars.

Dr. Rainford, an Episcopal minister of New York City, witnessing the results of irreligious schools, has for years advocated the necessity of moral training. A few days ago he said: "I would begin by teaching in the public schools the fundamental principles of religion. The education given to children in the public schools to day is damnable. I say it not on my own word, but on the word of those who are in position to know—and do know."

It is a hard verdict—"The education given in the public schools to-day is damnable"—the verdict of a man of deep religious convictions, one who believes that the age is eminently religious, but debarred in its faulty educational methods from proper channels of expression. If men accustomed to land the public schools are obliged against their will to condemn them, surely "children of the light"—fathers and mothers nurtured at the breast of the Spouse of Christ should be the last to victimize Catholic youth by subjecting it to their influence.

The proper education of youth is the burning question of to day, and every day. This education is furnished in Catholic schools.—Cleveland Uquiverse.

MERCILESS SECULARISM.

"Merely secular education," writes George Onnet, the French novelist, "has a fearful share in bringing about decadence of morals. The abatement of conscience, the recrudescence of crime, the precocity of criminalism, are the out-comes of the merciless secularism of the schools. 'Free-thought' can no more be a method of instruction than a hail-storm a process of tillage. Were it not that the good sense and the strong piety of the women of France set right the consciences that were warped in the schools, the evil would be a hundred-fold greater." What Onnet says of France is equally applicable to this country. The merciless secularism of the schools is grinding the public conscience to pieces; crime grows apace, and the nation grows blinder and blinder to its cause. The difficulties of rectification increase every day, for our public school system is now fast in the grip of the political machine. It has bred an army of bread-and-butter partisans, who see in it the means of their livelihood. Amongst these are unfortunately not a few Catholics, whose worldly interests are thus bound up with it. Our only hope of betterment is that there will come a time when the evil will grow so openly appalling that it will force public recognition of the inherent viciousness of the system. In self-preservation the Church is forced to build and support her own schools. It is a hardship, but one which the exigencies of the Faith necessitate. Onnet's words are a warning to us; let Catholics profit by them, and with all the means at their disposal preserve their children from the evils of the merciless secularism of godless education.—Church Progress.