

The Catholic Record.

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

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DON'T KNOW-ISM

By THE OBSERVER

"I don't know," is the favourite formula of those who are called "Agnostics." Agnosticism is defined as a "school of thought," (a high-sounding phrase used by every body of persons who set up some vagary of their own), a school of thought which holds that man can know nothing of ultimate realities, or whether any such exist; that his only means of knowledge is through the comparison of things and results that he can see; that we cannot know anything outside our own mental processes and the existence of other minds; that, as it is put in popular phrase, we cannot get behind the looking glass. Theoretically, the agnostic admits that Heaven and Hell, God, the Soul, and Revelation may be true; but he says it is impossible to be sure that they are true.

Professor Huxley, the inventor of the term "agnosticism" in this connection, thought that the existence of beings higher than man was rather probable than improbable; and saw some logical probability in the government of the universe by a "divine syndicate" of great spiritual essences. The theory of agnosticism is, of course, not new. It originated with a "school of thought" a very long time ago, in ancient Greece; and is the theory of the skeptical or Pyrrhonist school of Greek philosophers. In a sense there is no new error in matters of religion. There are new manifestations, new results of old errors forever cropping up. The Reformation which began in Germany in the sixteenth century, put forth a crop of new errors in doctrine; but the essential error which underlay the Reformation was as old as the first rebellion of the Israelites against God; and that error was human pride and human blindness; the desire, based in the corrupt heart of fallen man, to rid himself of duty, responsibility and the obligation to believe and obey, and to set up some new sort of human vagary in place of the divine law.

The substitution of man's mind for God's Revelation is the common factor in all heresies, as it is, and was, in all infidelities, ancient and modern. The pagans, who had lost all definite idea of God, frankly set up in His place, their own minds and their own bodies; and the works of their own hands in the shape of idols. Sometimes a distorted remnant of God's original Revelation to man remained to them and impelled them to worship His works; the sun, the moon; the stars; or even a river, or some other great work of nature.

The agnostic is a worshipper of humanity, too. Theoretically, he admits the possibility, sometimes even the probability, of the existence of something higher than human nature; but, in practice and in fact, nearly all agnostics deny it. One cannot worship the human mind and at the same time rise above its weaknesses. The mind does not exist that is entirely open and without opinions in regard to religion. The average man who calls himself an agnostic is much nearer to being an atheist. Theoretically, the agnostic denies that any man can be an atheist, any more than he can be a believer. "I don't know," he says; "no man can know," and he professes to have a completely open mind.

But he has not. No such mind exists; and the agnostic, for practical purposes, may be lined up with the atheist. The agnostic ought to be, on his statement of principles, the most tolerant of men. He is tolerant enough towards the atheist; but he is not at all tolerant towards the believer. At whom are the sarcasms and ridicule of the agnostic directed? Always at the believer; never at the atheist; a Huxley might be able to be more impartial than the average agnostic; but it is with the average agnostic that we have to do, in every-day life.

Agnosticism, in greater or less degree, is the attitude of very large numbers of people to-day. Most of those who have lost confidence in the non-Catholic sects have drifted into

a skeptical attitude towards religious truth. Now, on its own showing, agnosticism, or skepticism, ought at least to be tolerant; ought at least not to be aggressive. But it is aggressive. Agnostics are bound, on their own showing, to refrain from being dogmatic; so far from that, they are extremely dogmatic. They are, moreover, dogmatic in trying to establish a negative; which makes their attitude more unreasonable still. They ought, on their own showing, never to assert either a dogmatic negative nor a dogmatic affirmative; yet, they rush to the attempt to show that the believer is wrong. To their "I don't know," they add, "You don't know," and to that they add, "No one knows."

Thus their open mind, which they loudly boast of, becomes as tightly closed as any other mind which gives itself up wholly to a prepossession; and this translation of a theoretically negative attitude into a practically affirmative and aggressive attitude, reduces agnosticism to absurdity. For it is absurd to be aggressive in an attitude which is summed up in "I don't know."

The man who claims to know something is pardonable if he is aggressively sure of what he claims to know. But the man who admits he knows nothing ought to be humble.

CARDINAL MERCIER

THROGS THUNDER HEARTFELT GREETING TO VENERABLE PRIMATE OF BELGIUM

WINS ALL WITH HIS SMILE
Philadelphian Standard and Times

"I can only say thank you. What else is there for me to say?" was Cardinal Mercier's reply when asked for a message to the American people as he stepped from the transport Northern Pacific and stood for the first time on American soil.

Belgium's heroic prince of the Church, whose indomitable defiance of the German invader has made him one of the most outstanding figures of the Great War, was accompanied on his journey to this country by thousands of American doughboys who were returning to their homes after having helped to drive out the common foe. As he stepped from shipboard to shore, thundering cheer upon cheer from the lusty throats of his fellow-voyagers gave convincing evidence, if such were needed, to the waiting throngs of the high esteem in which he was held by them. For a week he had been among them, walking the decks and talking with them, and his gentle, lovable manner had won their hearts.

Tall and slender, Cardinal Mercier stood out above most of those around him, and there was little in his gentle manner to depict the man who had gone his way regardless of threats and orders, and who had won the undying admiration of the entire world.

GREETED AT PIER

Long before the transport had reached her pier the watchers on the wharf had caught sight of the Cardinal standing on the bridge gazing at the shores of the country that had responded so admirably when the appeal had gone forth telling of the need of his native land.

As he stepped on the shore on Tuesday he said that he could almost feel sorry that his journey across the ocean had come to so early a conclusion; that he had not felt so rested and refreshed in twenty years.

The transport had been welcomed to the dock by the band of the embarkation department, and as the Cardinal stepped from the ship, the musicians swung into the stirring strains of "La Brabançonne," the national anthem of Belgium. A radiant smile crossed his face. He drew himself up to his full, imposing height and remained standing thus until the playing had finished.

After staying at the episcopal residence overnight as the guest of Archbishop Hayes, Cardinal Mercier left New York for Baltimore, on Wednesday, after seeing all of the parade of General Pershing and his warriors that had passed the Cathedral by noon. He will return to New York on September 17 and will be received at the City Hall, and the day after will go to Albany. From Albany, where a reception will be tendered him by Governor Smith he will go again to Baltimore, attend a meeting of the Catholic Bishops at Washington and deliver an address, and from Washington on September 25 begin the journey that will take him through so much of the United States. His Eminence will come to this city on September 26.

WARM WELCOME FOR PRELATE

Some notion of the warmth which is certain to greet him everywhere upon his American travels was afforded him Wednesday while the Northern Pacific was carrying him

from Sandy Hook to the army pier at Hoboken, where he disembarked. The police boat Patrol, with Mayor Hylan and a goodly representation of the Mayor's committee of welcome on board and with also two other committees, one appointed by Archbishop Hayes and the other by Cardinal Gibbons, picked up the Northern Pacific at quarantine and escorted her to her Hoboken berth.

The Patrol was dressed with flags, so was the landing pier, the Belgian flag being central in the decorations of course. The Patrol disembarked her passengers at the pier within a few minutes after the Northern Pacific had made fast, and one of the first to go aboard the transport was Mayor Hylan with Rodman Wanamaker, of the Mayor's committee, close upon his heels. They encountered Cardinal Mercier in a companionway, and there the Cardinal was accorded a vivid first impression of New York.

Mayor Hylan bowed low. "Your Eminence," he said, "New York city greets you. Your Eminence, meet Rodman Wanamaker, of the Mayor's committee."

Ultimately the Patrol carried Cardinal Mercier to the foot of West Fifth Street and from there he rode to the residence of Archbishop Hayes by automobile.

HAS COME TO THANK AMERICA

Asserting that his only mission to this country was to convey to the people of America his "admiration and love" and to express on behalf of the people of Belgium, "both Catholic and Protestant," their gratitude. Cardinal Mercier spoke feelingly of the reception tendered him and his joy at being on American soil for the first time.

It is a remarkable ending of a delightful voyage," he said, "a voyage in company with many of your noble soldiers returning from a task well performed. I could not even fancy the magnificent reception that has been tendered me. I have wanted to come for a long time—I have yearned to tell your people of my love and esteem. I cannot go everywhere I would like to go in America, and I am depending on you, my friends of the press, to convey the message for me.

LAUDS UNDER SAM'S FIGHTERS

"I have followed the magnificent record of your army in France and Belgium, and the men of your army magnified the love I have for you and supported the magnificent record of the Americans who preceded them. Your Mr. Hoover and the members of the commission for relief in Belgium have our undying gratitude. Without them and the services they rendered many of our people would have died from starvation. You not only fed us when we were hungry, but you prevented the Germans from taking what food we had ourselves. It was a magnificent service that we of Belgium will never forget."

None of those who talked with him was able to get him to talk of himself at any length, or pin him down to his own part in the war. Upon the subject of his famous encyclical letter he was deprecating, saying that its great effect was derived from the steadfast courage of the parish priesthood, who affixed copies of it on their church doors at the peril of their lives, so that all the Belgian people might read it. He deprecates as a thing any man would have done his sullen defiance of Von der Goltz when the German general was appointed Governor and Cardinal Mercier visited him and demanded the liberation of priests deported to Germany and that the holding of whole communities responsible for the acts of single individuals must cease.

The Cardinal was then asked regarding the time when he was under surveillance by the Germans and he told of how he was delayed by his captors in sending to the Associated Press his answer to a request for information as to whether he had been arrested.

"Yes," he asserted, "I can say I was—at least 'detained.' They came to me on Thursday morning—shortly before 6 o'clock, just as I was preparing to officiate at Mass. I was told that I was to appear before General von Bissing. I asked the three soldiers who came with the message when I was to go, and they said they would let me know.

"I told them I could not go that day, nor the next, nor the day following and they departed, but told me not to leave my palace.

"The same message was repeated the next day, and Saturday, and on Sunday I was definitely instructed not to go out. During those three days I was under surveillance, because the Germans sent men to ascertain if I was still at home.

"During this time I received a message from the Associated Press asking if I was under arrest. My reply to it they refused to send, and told me I must change it, as the military could not pass it. I refused to change the sense of the message for the reason—as I told them—I could not do so and tell the truth, but they accepted my agreement to change the wording—which told the same thing."

BELIEVES GERMANS PLAN REVENGE

Cardinal Mercier asserted that although the German military government was not now in power, he believed the Germans were preparing for revenge and that Belgium would be included with France in whatever plans they would make to attempt to wrest back what they have lost.

His Eminence was silent as to matters relating to the League of Nations and other political subjects. "My mission is to tell of our love and gratitude—and nothing else," he added.

TRIBUTE TO FRENCH CATHOLICITY

Rev. Dr. Van Allen, Rector of the Episcopal Church of the Advent, Boston, who writes under the name of "Presbyter Ignatius" in the Living Church, speaking of his experiences in France says:

"I have just come from service in one of the smaller French cathedrals. It was all homelike enough; the Breaking of the Bread followed the Lord's Day with the Lord's own Service. And the devotion of the people was visible and gratifying. The heart of France is soundly Christian without doubt. One could not but regret the malicious 'anti-clericalism' that had named the square immediately adjacent to the venerable church, 'Place Emile Zola.' It was a distinctly vulgar thing to do, as if a foul-mouthed street urchin had put out his tongue at the successor of St. Gatien and St. Martin. I thought of the statue of Renan, erected by his admirers just outside the Cathedral of Treguier, and of the Christians' response—a great Calvary apostate. Julian the Emperor, carved at the foot of the central cross, 'Vielici, Galilaei!—Galilaei, Thou hast conquered!'"

"Anti-clericalism in France is an unlovely thing at best: it is hatred, and hatred is destructive and blind if it is not that post's dower of which the poet sings, 'the hate of hate.' Little as I love Vaticanism, it is vastly preferable to the poisonous and obscure spirit of Voltaire, renewed in men who are his spiritual descendants however much his intellectual inferiors."

"One is struck by the predominantly amiable and gracious faces of the French clergy. Many of them are notably venerable and spiritual. This splendid tribute to French Catholicity is all the more remarkable coming as it does from a man virulently anti-Papal on most occasions.—Catholic Columbian."

K. OF C. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

To meet the needs of reconstruction the Knights of Columbus in their recent convention outlined an educational program that will mean much for the nation. Their war-work has met with generous commendation from Americans of every creed and there is no doubt that the peace policy outlined at Buffalo last month will likewise meet with a hearty response from every American who realizes the vital need of true constructive work. The secret of the Order's success in the field was its untiring efforts in the interest of the enlisted man. He was to be looked after first. The officer came second, as there were many to take an interest in him. So in the peace policy that the Knights have outlined their educational work is mapped out for the plain man who wants to equip himself for business or industry. The policy is then as the courses show vocational or occupational. Every possible agency is to be employed to induce our people to pursue some study which will be a means of improving their condition and enlarging their influence. Not only for men and boys but for women and girls as well would these practical knights in a practical age carry the torch of true progress, and open wide the portals of the hall of knowledge.

This is by no means a new venture for the Knights of Columbus. Broader it is true in its scope than any educational effort yet made by them, it is not the first time they have put the force of united action back of truth and learning. The Chair of American History at the Catholic University was founded by the Knights of Columbus. They have been generous in establishing scholarships through the different councils in many colleges throughout the land, and their lecture courses have endeavored to meet the needs of the great mass of the population that had not the opportunity in their youth of gaining the advantage of systematic schooling. And no organization has done more for the spread of Catholic literature and the dissemination of Catholic truth in the interest not only of Catholics but of true Americans.

With an enviable war-record to their credit the Order can now carry on the work of Americanization and the build up a citizenship that will be healthy and sound. No detail has

been neglected in mapping out the plan of campaign that the Knights of Columbus have entered upon willingly and cheerfully as a patriotic body of Americans. Nothing since the Bishops' Labor Program has marked a real forward movement in true Americanism so strikingly as this latest effort of the Knights of Columbus.—America.

BROTHERLY LOVE

Exploitation, of which we hear so much these days, is the very negation of love. For love consists essentially in communication. God's love is an overflowing of His happiness on creatures, and all created love, to be worthy of its name, must be a giving rather than a taking.

Love, in the first place, involves a communication of physical strength. This is beautifully illustrated in parental love. Parents share their own bodily substance with their offspring. This is the first act of parental love. After that father and mother supplement for years the yet imperfect physical strength of their children. And as the children of a family, in spite of their weakness and undeveloped condition, are comfortable because of the support they receive from their parents, so in the large human family all ought to be happy through communication of strength from the strong to the weak. Is your neighbor sick, be hand and foot to him. And better than paying for other hands to do the work is personal service which carries together with assistance the soothing balm of sympathy. Are whole groups or classes of men crushed under the weight of capitalist incubus, use your influence—and every citizen has a vote to cast—to bring about a more equitable order of society. Without an earnest effort to aid in this fundamental adjustment our love of neighbor is but a hypocritical pretense.

Next, love of neighbor demands a communication of mental strength. This duty is plain enough, say, in the teacher. A teacher who would not exert himself to give his best would thereby show that he has but a poor love for his pupil. The same holds good of the preacher. And yet how many give of their mental weakness, instead of their mental strength, because they shirk the labor of study and preparation! But most men have, at least now and then, an opportunity to correct an error, to impart truth, to warn an erring fellowman. To refrain from doing so through indolence or human respect is to betray lack of brotherly love.

Finally, love requires the communication of actual strength. Here let me call attention to one thing only, the blessing of a good example. We all understand how a careless tubercular individual may spread disease. Similarly, a moral leper carries contagion far and wide. But while a physically healthy person has not the power to impart his strength to others, a strong and beautiful character is a tower of strength to all he comes in contact with. Such is the charm and fascination of virtue that it compels admiration and begets a desire, nay insinuates a power, for imitation. And this practice of brotherly love is within the reach of all, though like the greatest love that was ever witnessed on earth, it demands a crucifixion, in our case the crucifixion of our corrupt nature.—S. in The Guardian.

LEADING THE WAY

The splendid reconstruction program enunciated by the Bishops recently has met with universal approbation. New problems engendered by the War begot the necessity of new remedies. The hard conditions that faced the workers of the nation were pressing for a solution. Unrest was rife on all sides. The time was ripe for the proclamation of principles that had regard to the well being of society through the true uplifting of the individuals that formed that society.

It had become a commonplace to find individuals discouraged and disheartened by the grinding poverty that inevitable environment had placed upon them. It was no uncommon thing to find families occupying quarters that ill befitted human habitation. Shop conditions had become oppressive and threatened the health not only of the laborers but of the families that depended on them for support.

And yet while we had laws that were made to protect the working man and make for his intellectual, spiritual and material betterment, so enormous had become the power of organized industry and so greedy had the world become that the one factor that constituted society was lost sight of and a condition introduced that meant social degradation and national demoralization.

It had been widely asserted by the enemies of religion that the Church advanced the spiritual side of man's nature but paid grudging heed to his material welfare. It was said that she would concern herself only with his soul and neglected his body. The falsity of this is very clearly seen in the light of the immortal encyclicals

of the illustrious Pope Leo who many years ago gave to the world the most comprehensive social program that has ever fallen under the gaze of man.

Now the Bishops have come forth at the psychological moment with a masterly application of the great principles of Pope Leo and won the admiration of the world. They have fully realized that there can be ordinarily no virtue in Christianity where poverty is eating at the vitals of the family. They have diagnosed the ills of society and have prescribed the remedy to bring about a permanent cure.

They have come forth as champions of Labor. They have seen the evil of individualism, socialism and unrestrained capitalism, have taken up the fight in behalf of equal rights for the laboring man and to secure an equitable return for honest service. They have gone further. They have found by careful scrutiny that modern industry has been a health wrecker and that greed has crushed out the possibility of men to earn a decent wage and bring up a family respectably.

With the full knowledge of conditions today rampant they set about the task of bettering the working man's condition. They have by their diligent researches and prompt championship of Labor shown that the Church stands now where she has always stood, on the side of justice for the common citizen. A mere perusal of the solutions offered for present-day evils suffices to drive home one fact, that the Church, the friend of the poor in the beginning, the hope of the wage earner through the ages, is the champion of the future. Her divine mission conceived in love and sealed in the death of her Founder was to forward the interests of humanity. None who have watched her achievements throughout the War and witnessed her brilliant career since the signing of the armistice will question her ability to lead mankind aright in the future by instilling true principles into every-day life and bringing together in unity all God's children.—The Pilot.

SHORTER HOURS OF LABOR

The love of God has wisely established one day among seven as a day of rest. Even apart from the necessity of having a pause for the higher interests of the soul, man needs a periodical rest from work lest his organism be worn out before its time. Besides, the invention of machinery ought to work in the direction of eliminating the most exhaustive human labor as well as to shorten the hours of actual application.

But there is a limit to every good thing, even to the curtailing of the daily hours of labor. Every comfort is the product of some kind of labor. Now granted that with abolition of economic abuses the existing comforts might and should be more justly distributed, it is difficult to see how the increase and spreading of comforts can be reconciled with a diminution of labor. In this connection it must be remembered that, while the laborers, both through lack of immigration and increased emigration have a tendency to become fewer, production must grow if comforts are to reach all around. But how will production grow if the sum total of laboring hours is diminished?

Nor would it seem that eight hours of work a day is too much of a fatigue for the average laboring man. Professional and business men, as well as farmers, give certainly more than a third of the day to their vocational work. If it is said that the latter work longer hours because it is their profit to do so, it might be made the profit of the laboring man to put in more hours at his work. Let him be paid by the hour, as is already the custom in certain trades.

The point we are making is that it would be suicidal to let a portion of the available laboring energy of our people go to waste. By such a policy we should become an idle and indolent people, and all peoples of that character are bound to retrograde and succumb to more energetic nations in the world's march toward progress.—S. in The Guardian.

SACRED MUSIC CONGRESS TO BE HELD IN FRANCE

Paris, August 22.—A congress of sacred music is to be held at Tourcoing, on September 21-23, and the organizers have called for a competition of sacred compositions in the spirit of the "Motu Proprio" of Pius X, which is today the canon law of the Church as regards sacred music.

A Mass and a complete Benedictine service were asked for, and several interesting compositions have been received by the judges not only from France, but from Italy, Holland, Belgium, Spain, etc. The jury consists of the Abbes Bayart, Delporte and Vandewalle, of the Commission of Liturgical Chant at Lille. Amongst the works already chosen for prizes are a "Missa Domini" by Wimbat, organist of Utrecht Cathedral; "Domine Deus" by Dom Kops, of Louvain Abbey, and "Benedicta et Venerabilis" of Paul Delmoth.

CATHOLIC NOTES

Rome, September 9.—The Holy Father has sent an urgent plea to Germany, asking for humanitarian treatment of the Poles in Silesia.

For seven weeks now the principal Rome newspapers have failed to appear owing to the still unsettled printers' strike, according to word received in this country.

Cardinal Logue has received from the Belgian King the diploma and insignia of Grand Officer of the Order de la Couronne, in recognition of the kindness shown by Ireland to the Belgians.

During the War, M. Bordes, a native of Lourdes and a pupil of the school of aviation at Pau, flew over Lourdes, and, after making majestic circles, threw, in the direction of the Grotto of the Apparition, a beautiful bouquet of the Allied colors, with the dedication, "From a young aviator to Our Lady of Lourdes."

The spread of Catholicity in Scotland is notable as is evident by the statistics published in the Western Catholic Calendar which is just out. The Catholics of the Archdiocese of Glasgow now number 400,000; the baptisms during 1917 were close to 13,000 while the school population is almost 75,000.

Warsaw, Sept. 11.—The Apostolic Nuncio, Mons. Ratti, has now been received in formal audience by the President of the Government, to whom he has presented his letter of credence from the Holy See. Mons. Ratti spoke very warmly of the Polish people, and his speech has been recorded in the newspapers of all parties with the greatest approval.

New York—John Mitchell, president of the United Mine Workers of America, one of the foremost labour leaders of this nation, who had done so much as any other single man to get decent working conditions for the mining industry, died here Sept. 9. He was a convert to the Catholic Church and a Knight of Columbus.

The Corpus Christi procession through the streets of Leicester, England, has called forth a protest from members of non-Conformist bodies and Kentsities, who presented a memorial to the Watch Committee of the City Council. The Committee responded unanimously that the protest lie on the table, one member remarking that its place was under the table. This was a cause of great gratification to the Catholics of the city.

The number of vocations to the priesthood has shown a marked increase in Ireland during the past few years. At present all the Irish seminaries are overcrowded. Maynooth College, which usually has slightly over 600 students, has now over 600. The Chinese Mission Society, established two years ago from Maynooth, has received this year over 300 applications from students for its new college near Galway.

Sir William Tyrrell, who will come to Washington as secretary of the British Legation, is an Irishman and a Catholic. He has been employed in the Foreign Office under Sir Edward (now Earl) Grey since 1907. He was a member of the British delegation to the Peace Conference. He was born in Dublin in 1866, the son of Mr. Justice Tyrrell, and was educated at Oxford.

London, August 25.—The death has just taken place of Mr. Ashworth Peter Burke, the Editor of "Burke's Peerage," and other genealogical works of reference. The second surviving son of Sir Bernard Burke, Ulster King of Arms, he was educated at Trinity College, Dublin, and later at Sandhurst, becoming Lieut. of the 1st Batt. and subsequently Capt. of the 4th Batt. of the Royal Irish Regiment; at one time he served as Aide-de-Camp to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.

In the chapel at Acton Burnell Park, Shropshire, the home of her old friends, Lady Smythe, the late Sir Walter Smythe, Caroline Alice Cannon was received into the Church on Wednesday by Abbott Ford (Titular Abbot of Glastonbury). The late Sir Walter Smythe, the friend of the convert, was a J. P. and D. L. for Salop and Monmouthshire, and was educated at Downside, where his family had assisted in various ways the Benedictines of Downside, who were sheltered at Acton Burnell, and there remained till they bought their Downside property in 1814.—Edinburgh Herald.

Rome, Sept. 11.—Cardinal Mercier left Brest on Wednesday for his tour of the United States. The American visit of the Belgian prelate, always a distinguished personage, and rendered especially illustrious by the events of the last five years, is extremely gratifying to the Holy See. A closer understanding and union between European and American Catholics will mean also a closer union of all around the Pope. However, no heed should be given to stories that there is about Cardinal Mercier's visit anything in the nature of a political embassy from the Pope to President Wilson or to anyone else.