

WESTERN OCEANA.

CANADALISM.

In the January number of the "Annals of the Propagation of the Faith," we find (says the *Catholic Advocate*) a letter from the Revd. Father Chevron, dated Futuna, 21st October, 1841, which gives an interesting account of the inhabitants of the two neighboring islands, *Futuna & Arofi*, where the writer has been for some time engaged in the labours of an arduous Apostolic ministry. From the following extract we can understand something of the character of these islanders, and form some estimate of the merit of that generous self-sacrifice and devotion which induce the missionary to persevere in his sacred undertaking.

"Until now," writes Mr. Chevron,—"religion has made but little progress in our island; some catechumens moderately well instructed; a certain number of children and adults baptized while in danger of death; to this, at least exteriorly, is reduced the fruit of the mission. The principal cause of the sterility of our ministry is the cupidity of the king, who, in his quality of *Tabernacle of God*, considers that he is interested in maintaining the ancient worship, by whose offerings his own coffers are enriched. In imitation of the Prince, and for fear to displease him, perhaps, also, because in becoming Christians they would have to be virtuous, the greater part of the islanders remain deaf to the solicitations of grace, whilst secretly they testify to us the desire to embrace our faith. We have reason to believe that the expression of this wish by the youth is sincere: and, in fact, concerning these, great hopes may be entertained;—but the old are sullied by a crime which appears to weigh upon their heads like a curse. I mean *Anthropophagy* or *Canibalism*, by them pushed, under the preceding reign, to the last degree of horror."

From documents drawn up after the oral testimony of the natives, it appears that not long since the number of inhabitants in the two islands was upwards of *four thousand*; to-day, it does not exceed *eight hundred*; and in great part the teeth of those who survive have effected this frightful decrease in the population.

Twenty years since, the rage for eating human flesh reached such a point, that the wars did not suffice to supply victims for these hideous banquets, and they began to hunt down men within their own tribe; men, women, children, old persons, friends and enemies, were killed without distinction. Persons were even seen destroying members of their own family: mothers, to feed themselves, have been seen roasting the offspring of their own bosoms!

How often have I touched the hand of a wretch who had caused his aged parents to be cooked for the entertainment of his friends! When any of them offers me something, it seems to me that I behold still upon his fingers the stain of blood—the blood of his mother!

To the King only, in his quality of God, were served up entire bodies; for others, the bodies were cut up. Upon the table of the prince have been counted at the same time, fourteen victims, and he has

been heard to cry out—"Courage, courage, pluck up the bad plant!" Together with the roasted bodies, they often served up living men, with their hands and feet bound: they were stretched out upon large trays, that their blood might not be lost, then were cut off the arms, legs, and finally the head, or rather these members, were sawed off with a split of bamboo which cut, pretty much like a wooden knife. One of those who recounted to us these horrible details, without being much affected, had killed only six for his share. "This was little," he added. They pointed out to me one day an old man, who was the only one who survived this butchery out of a village of three hundred souls.

This horrible custom was rapidly conducing to the entire extermination of the people, when the King was strangled by his accomplices, in a religious assembly. God, who holds the hearts of men in his hands, inspired the new prince with sentiments of humanity, which he enjoined upon his subjects; and since then, not a single islander has been eaten. It is not without regret that the old Cannibals have renounced the horrible dish in which they gloried; more than one endeavour has been made to revive the sanguinary taste, and make it once more the fashion.—Quite recently, an old man proposed that they should again seek for the *food of the gods*. "A divinity," said he "has in a dream demanded of me the restoration of the ancient religion." Happily, the king closed his mouth, by declaring, that if any one should be eaten, he would be the first victim.

Nevertheless, a famine would be enough to subject the whole island once more to the reign of anthropophagy. May God preserve us from such a misfortune!—Already we are sufficiently surrounded by the elements of destruction. To speak of infanticide only, for example: this is carried to its utmost extent in this island. It is no longer a disgrace for mothers to kill their children: we find some who have destroyed as many as six of these innocent creatures: some destroy them in their womb—others strangle them at birth—or bury them living in the sand. Last week,

three newly born babes were thus buried alive. A few hours after, some dogs discovered the body of one of these poor creatures, and brought it to the mother: she, without emotion, went again and buried her victim: but soon after, the dogs came back and laid at her feet the head and arm of her poor child, as if to reproach her for her cruelty. To decide a mother to take this barbarous step, it is enough that the father of the child is no longer agreeable to her, or that her husband has abandoned her. In both cases, if she do not feel the courage to stifle the cries of nature, the old women of her neighbourhood consult together, a vote is taken concerning the child's life, and if condemned, they charge themselves, with the execution, even in spite of the protests and disapprobation of the mother.

The custom of strangling the aged does not exist here, as practiced in some other islands which I have seen; but when they

become a burden, they are, under the pretence of being in bad health, subjected to a severe diet, and are often removed by starvation. Poor people! Oh! how greatly they need our prayers! If religion do not soon bless them, it is to be feared that, one day, *Futuna* will be a desert island."

Who can peruse this revolting and almost incredible narrative without feeling sentiments of the deepest pity for these mere animal creatures with human shape, and human soul; and of admiration for the disinterested and charitable zeal of the pious missionaries, who, amid such circumstances, pray and toil for their conversion to the faith? We should pray that God would give success to their endeavours.

BAPTISM.—A writer in the *Churchman* inquires, whether it be a fact that Catholics (his nicknames us after the style of his sects) baptize persons who already received baptism from Episcopalian ministers. To save our contemporary trouble, we beg to state that it is a very general custom to baptize under condition all who are said to have received baptism in any sect, whenever positive testimony cannot be had of the due performances of the rite. Low Church Episcopalians having nearly the same views of baptism as Presbyterians, are liable to give little importance to the application of the water, which is regarded as a mere ceremony of association with the visible Church. The writer himself gives instances of extreme carelessness.—*Catholic Herald*.

"I have some fears that the rubric of the Church, requiring dipping or pouring, is not attended to as it should be. I knew a member of our Church, in advanced life, once expressed astonishment at a clergyman's pouring water from the hollow of his hand upon an infant's head. It was quite a new thing. "Indeed?" said the Minister, "well, I know no way of being a Churchman, but by punctually conforming to the rubric. Please examine it." It was examined, and it was found he was right; that person had seen baptism administered by just wetting the ends of the fingers and touching the child. Are such baptisms those which the Church would approve of? And if we are careless about our rules in one respect, may we not be in another, and thus lay ourselves open, as it seems we do, to the suspicion of administering no baptism whatever? WESTCHESTER.

P. S. Query.—Should a minister ever begin to pour water on a candidate for baptism till after he has pronounced the candidate's Christian name? Some begin to pour (if they pour at all) as the pronounce the candidate's name, and the pouring is done before the first name in the Trinity is reached."

ISLE OF SKYE.—This island has within the last 40 years furnished for the public service 21 lieutenant-generals and major-generals; 45 lieutenant-colonels; 600 majors, captains, lieutenants and subalterns; 10,000 foot soldiers; 120 pipers; four governors of British colonies; one governor-general; one adjutant-general; one chief baron of England; and one judge of the supreme Court of Scotland. The generals may be classed thus: eight Macdonalds, six Macleods, two Macallisters, two McCashills, one McKinnon, one Elder, and one McQueen. The Isle of Skye is 60 miles long, and 20 broad. Truly the inhabitants are a wondrous people. It may be mentioned that this island is the birthplace of Cuthullin, the celebrated hero mentioned in Ossian's poems.—*Aberdeen Herald*.

THE PROTESTANT, OR NEGATIVE FAITH, REFUTED: AND THE CATHOLIC, OR AFFIRMATIVE FAITH, DEMONSTRATED FROM SCRIPTURE.

XXXII.—OF THE PROTESTANT'S RULE OF FAITH.

(Continued.)

To each, then, was given the key of his Master's kingdom; to Peter that of Heaven, with power to open or shut its gates: to Luther that of the *bottomless pit*; with power indeed to open but never to shut—"The high commissions too of both were granted for quite opposite merits and purposes; Peter's for affirming, and to affirm; Luther's, for denying, and to contradict. Peter's, to build up, and preserve entire: Luther's to pull down, scatter and destroy."

For the same opposite purposes were their commissions to be transmitted to their successors.—Peter's, transmitted to his successors, has all along preserved the unity and stability of the faith: and the church founded on him, the rock, is still, and will ever remain, the same firm and indissoluble fabric: or, according to Saint Paul, the pillar and ground of truth.—1 Tim. iii. 15. Luther's, consisting wholly in denial and contradiction, transmits to his followers, an equal right to deny and contradict. Hence all with them is wrangling, discord and dissension; often ending in civil broil, rebellion, war, and bloodshed. "The bottomless pit" says Bishop Walton, a Church of England dignitary; "seems to have been laid open: whence locusts with stings have issued forth; a numerous race of sectaries and heretics; who have renewed all the heresies of old; and added to them new and monstrous opinions of their own," &c. See his Polyglot, Prolog. &c. Indeed, heresies in former ages came but singly forth; nor had the Church to contend but with one, or two at a time. But, ever since Luther's reformation was broached, she has had to work her way through endless growing swarms of such: a motly, clamorous, and discordant crew—agreeing together in nothing but in their fell hatred and opposition to her, the Church of the Redeemer.

By the Protestant's rule of faith, the scripture, which rightly understood, is the infallible word of God, instructing us in our belief, and directing us in our practice; is thus laid before us as a snare; just as it was before the Saviour himself by the original tempter; Mat. vi. whoever strives to turn all our bliss to bane, in opposition to God, who turns all our bane to bliss. In the mouths of the Saviour's true pastors; whom he commands us to hear, as we would himself, Luke x. 16, the scripture is the *word of life*. But in the mouth of the devil quoting it to tempt the Saviour; and in the mouths of the fiend's inspired interpreters; the same scripture becomes the *importuned source of death*; as Saint Peter clearly testifies, where mentioning Saint Paul's epistles, in which says he, "there are certain things hard to be understood; which the unlearned, and unstable wrest, as they do the other scriptures to their own perdition"—1 Peter iii. 15, 16; for, as he declares in another place, "no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation."—2 Peter i. 20. In such distinct and positive terms does Christ's chief apostle condemn the arch-reformer's main and leading principle.

But let us take a nearer view of the Protestant's rule of faith, and see to what absurd extremes it leads all those who follow it.

They say their faith is grounded on scripture only, or the written word. But their rule itself, the foundation, on which they build their faith, is no where grounded on scripture; otherwise, let them shew that in all the scripture where we are commanded to hold nothing as our rule of faith, but scripture; and that too as interpreted by every man of sound judgment. Let them shew me also where scripture declares itself to be, what they believe it, "the entire revealed word of God;" since, on its own testimony we find that several books of it have been lost. And St Paul mentions, besides, as the revealed word of God, since he commands us to stand fast by them—"Traditions learned by word, as well as by epistle."—2 Thess. ii. 14. Let them prove to me, in fine, from scripture, that the only books of it, which they retain, are genuine scripture; and those, which they reject, spurious. Till they do this, which they never can; they must own that their rule itself of faith is not grounded on scripture; and that therefore the other articles of their faith, as built upon that rule, are not grounded on scripture; but on a false bottom, and an imaginary foundation. The truth is, as Saint Augustine observes, we must believe the Church, before we can believe the scriptures. From her we have received them as the *written word of God*, and as such we acknowledge them only on the authority of her declaration.

The Protestant's Rule of Faith, besides, is a most unsure and fallacious one. For, in this must all agree with me, that no scripture can be a *sure rule of faith* which is liable to be misunderstood. But all scripture is liable to be misunderstood without an "infallible interpreter." Is every Protestant, then, that "infallible interpreter? Assuredly not. Is any Protestant, an "infallible interpreter? Who dares say he is? Then no Protestant is sure that he rightly understands the Scripture. Then no Protestant can pretend to have a *sure Rule of Faith*,