

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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INSPECTION INVITED.
**PASTORAL LETTER OF THE
BISHOP OF KINGSTON.**

We are happy to be enabled to lay before our readers the Lenten Pastoral of His Lordship the Bishop of Kingston. It is a document well worthy perusal, remembrance, and preservation. His Lordship never deals even with the most familiar truths or the most frequently discussed subjects except in a peculiarly lucid, original and inviting manner. The learned bishop after laying down the Lenten regulations for his diocese goes on to say:

FAITH ALONE IS INSUFFICIENT FOR SALVATION.

"Faith," says the holy Council of Trent, "is the beginning of human salvation, the foundation and root of all justification" (Sess. 6, ch. 8). Faith is to the soul what respiration is to the body. It is God breathing upon man "the breath of life," whereby he becomes, through his free acceptance of the inspiration, "a living soul" in the supernatural order. (Genesis 2 ch.) By faith we live to God in heaven; without faith we are dead to God, and the sort of life we live is "of the earth, earthly" (1 Cor. 15 ch.). Hence the great Apostle of the Nations has written: "The just man lives by faith" (Rom. 1 ch.); and again, "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Hebr. 11 ch.); and the Saviour has declared, "He that doth not believe, is already judged" (John 3 ch.). By respiration a person may inhale the pure air that quickens life into healthful action, or the foul air that vitiates the fountain of life, corrupts and kills the body. So also the soul may be nourished and strengthened into life everlasting by the true word of God, which came down from heaven and is sanctuarized in the bosom of the Holy Catholic Church, or it may be poisoned unto death by erroneous doctrines substituted for the word of God by heretical teachers or by well-meaning persons who have had the misfortune of being reared in forms of belief repugnant to the true faith of our Lord Jesus Christ. Again, although respiration is a primary essential condition, it is not, of itself, sufficient, for the maintenance of bodily life, food and drink and sleep and exercise being also necessary. So likewise in the spiritual order of existence, faith is only "the beginning of human salvation"; it is not salvation itself, nor does it confer or lay hold of salvation; it is not salvation by itself alone, but only when "it worketh by charity," as St. Paul took care to remind the Galatians (5 ch.). The theory of justification by faith alone having been invented as early as the lifetime of the Apostles by carnal men, St. James was directed by the Holy Ghost to rebuke it as follows: "What shall it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but hath not works? Shall faith be able to save him? Faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself. For, as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead" (James 2 ch.). By the pen of another Apostle, the same Holy Spirit teaches that a man may have faith strong enough to "move mountains," but, "if he have not charity, he is nothing" (1 Cor. 13 ch.). Wherefore, let no one rest content with his possessions of the true faith in idleness and neglect of the duties of Christian life. False religion is indeed worse than useless; but to be a Catholic by profession and not to live in accordance with the rules of Catholic life, will not save our souls. The believing sluggard will not fare better than the deluded fanatic on the last day. To all mankind the Saviour has said, "Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father, who is in heaven, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 7 ch.). To a rich young man of high position He said, "If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments" (Luke 18 ch.). And to his own chosen disciples His word of affectionate admonition was, "Ye are my friends, if ye do the things that I command you" (John 15 ch.).

FAITH WITHOUT PENANCE IS UNAVAILING.

Among the things commanded by our Lord Jesus Christ, the first and most indispensable is penance. "Unless ye do penance," said He, "ye shall all perish" (Luke 17 ch.). It behoves us to consider well this precept; for Lent is the season of penance for all the children of the Catholic Church. The Saviour has laid down the law in general form; the Church prescribes the time and manner of its fulfillment. Penance may be considered as the Sacrament of the New Law, whereby sins committed after Baptism are forgiven to the contrite and confessing Christian through the juridical abolition of a priest in virtue of the divine commission, "Whose sins ye shall forgive, they are forgiven them" (John 20 ch.). It may also be considered as a Virtue pre-requisite for the remission of actual sin, committed before or after Baptism, and as a rigidly demanded of every sinner under the Mosaic Law and before the deluge, as of Christians under the law of their Baptism. In this sense it is defined to be "a supernatural virtue moving man to detestation of his sins, and firm purpose of amending his life and punishing himself in com-

penation for the injury done to God by his transgressions. It is not a mere awakening of the soul to a consciousness of guilt, or a feeling of "Salvation"; neither is it a mere change of conduct, or repentance or resignation or remorse. It is a "virtue," or habit of the soul, active, impulsive, ready to develop into its proper acts on suitable occasions; and it is a "Supernatural Virtue," begotten of faith under the agency of divine grace and directed in all its motions towards God. The acts of this supernatural virtue of Penance are, 1st, a detestation of our sins; 2d, a firm purpose of amending our lives; and 3d, a desire to punish ourselves in compensation for the injury done to God by our transgressions. The memory of our sinfulness stirred in the soul by the casual reading of a good book, or the hearing of a sermon, or the warning of a parent, priest, or friend, the sight of the crucifix, the death of a companion, the tolling of the Church bell for Mass or funeral, is the signal for this Virtue of Penance to exert itself by these three acts. Taken together, they are what we call contrition, one of the essential constituents of the Sacrament of Penance, and are distinctly enunciated in our popular form of the Act of Contrition, thus:

AN ACT OF CONTRITION.

O my God! I am heartily sorry for having offended thee, and I detest my sins most sincerely, not only because by them I have lost all right to heaven, and have deserved the everlasting punishment of hell, but especially because they displease thee, my God, who art so deserving of all my love, for thy infinite goodness and most amiable perfection; and I firmly purpose, by thy holy grace, never more to offend thee, but to do all that I can to atone for my sins and amend my life.

Dear Rev'd Fathers, you have often observed our solicitude, during the examination of your children for Confirmation, to impress upon their mind the extreme importance of knowing how to make an Act of Contrition with exactness of form and thorough understanding of the supernatural motives on which it must be based in order to insure the forgiveness of sin. We are no less solicitous in regard of the adult members of Our flock. As a general rule, the Confession of sins, which Jesus Christ has ordained to be a condition of pardon and a constituent of the Sacrament of Penance in the New Law, is strictly observed in all its requirements by the faithful within the sacred tribunal. They declare their faults and sins with humility, sincerity, and formal integrity. On this score we have little apprehension for their valid reception of the Sacrament of Penance and forgiveness of their offences in the sight of God. But we are not quite so confident of the sufficiency of their Contrition at all times; and, if in this there be any failure, of what avail is their confession of sins? Willfulness, ignorance, negligence, forgetfulness or half-heartedness may spoil the Act of Contrition, which is the first and absolutely indispensable requisite for pardon of sins. There are circumstances in which Confession may be, or must be, dispensed with, but Contrition never. Should distance of place or suddenness of the death summons render it impossible for a priest to attend the bed side of a sinner, an Act of Contrition, vested with the prescribed conditions, will suffice for reconciliation with God. But if a Catholic man hardly knows how to make an act of perfect contrition in the days of his strength and in the calm of prayerful preparation for his regular approach to the Sacraments, how shall he be expected to settle everything rightly with his Maker in the hurry and fright and mental disturbance of a sudden sickness, attended, perhaps, by torturing pain or prostration of his faculties? We pray you, therefore, most earnestly to instruct, not your little ones only, but your adult congregations also, at Christmas and Easter and other suitable times, upon the essential conditions of true and salutary Contrition. You have no need to be told what these are. We shall barely summarize them for the benefit of your people who shall read this Pastoral.

CONDITIONS OF SORROW FOR SIN.

1st. It must be internal, that is, from the heart. The form of words pronounced by the lips will not suffice unless they express the inward feeling of the soul grieved at its crimes and its guiltiness before God. It must be as genuine as the heartfelt cry of the Prodigal Son, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee" (Luke 15 ch.). Should the force of passion or long continued indulgence of evil habits render it very difficult for the sinner to turn with his whole heart to God, he should seek the grace of true conversion by fervent prayer, fasting, alms-deeds, the hearing of Mass or procuring its celebration for his intention; and he should also present his humble and confident appeals for aid to the Blessed Virgin, the Mother of divine grace and Refuge of sinners.

2nd. It must be supernatural, that is, it must proceed from faith under the agency of grace. Now, since grace always acts in correspondence with faith, and is an invisible, ency nowise subject to human senses, we can know and be fully assured of its presence and action within us by one test only, viz. Does our sorrow for sin proceed from motives derived from faith? Our conscience will readily tell us what our motives are. If they be merely human, founded on temporal loss or advantage, fear or respect of mortal men; if we grieve for our excesses solely because they have resulted in ruin of health or peace or character or position, our sorrow is only a natural feeling, utterly disproportionate to the forgiveness of sin and acquisition of grace and final beatitude, all which are in order of supernatural existence, outside and above the powers and exigencies of nature. On the contrary, if our sorrow is derived from the consideration of God and our relations with Him, as revealed to us by the Christian faith, the motive is supernatural, and grace is active in co-operation. The Holy Council of Trent unfolds the suitable

motives in these words: "Adults are disposed unto justice when, excited and assisted by divine grace, conceiving 'faith by hearing' (Rom. 10 ch.), they are freely moved towards God, believing those things to be true which God has revealed and promised, and this especially, that God justifies the impious 'by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus' (Rom. 3 ch.); and when, understanding themselves to be sinners, they turn themselves from consideration of the fear of divine justice, whereby they are profably agitated, to consider the mercy of God, they are raised unto hope, confiding that God will be propitious to them for Christ's sake; and they begin to love Him as the fountain of all justice, and are therefore moved against sins by a certain hatred and detestation" (Sess. 6, ch. 6). The steps whereby the sinner is brought back from Satan and sin to God and grace, are here traced in beautiful order. Divine grace begins by "exciting and assisting" faith supplies the motives by accepting what "God has revealed and promised"; consciousness of guilt is awakened; "the fear of divine justice" profitably agitates the sinner; the "mercy of God" holds out the prospect of escape from the terrors of justice; the awestricken criminal is "raised unto hope" who develops into "confidence that God will be propitious for Christ's sake"; confidence begets "love"; at first timid, then more assured, as "the fountain of all justice" is reached; then finally, sin, that had heretofore separated the soul from its beloved Maker and Saviour, is "hated and detested."

3rd. Another quality of our sorrow for sin is, it must be supreme. Grievous crime against God's infinite Majesty is the supreme evil; no earthly misfortune, no evil whatever, is comparable to it in magnitude; it is, in a sense, infinite evil. Hence we do not grieve adequately over it, if we be not disposed to fly from it absolutely, even at the cost of incurring all temporal evils, yes, the loss of life by martyrdom, were this necessary. It should here be explained to the faithful that comparisons should not be expressly made between mortal sin and the evils of this life, by way of interrogating ourselves whether we would resist certain grievous temptations, should our resistance involve such and such a loss or such and such a domestic calamity. This would be a sacrilegious act, for it places upon our scale of our nature and our dread of sensible pain, to make us think the law of God too hard of observance. We should indeed be disposed to keep God's friendship at all costs, and save our souls under every trial, nowise tempting ourselves by idle comparisons, but confiding in God, that should our virtue be at any time too weak to resist the temptations of our sin, and "will not permit us to be tempted above that which we are able," as St. Paul assures us, (1 Cor. 10 ch.).

4th. Our sorrow must be universal. It must extend to all the mortal sins we are at present guilty of, that is, all the sins we have at any time committed, and which have not been already remitted. Mortal sins purged out of the soul by infusion of sanctifying grace, but sanctifying grace cannot co-exist with the guilt of any mortal sin whatever in the sanctuary of the soul; hence the remission of one mortal sin cannot be effected except by the remission of all; and consequently the sorrow, which is essentially necessary for pardon of any sin, must be sorrow for all our mortal sins without exception. Some persons more readily grieve for one class of sins than for another; but they should take good care to grieve for those also which are less troubled about, seeing that no sin can be pardoned without true hearty sorrow, and the sanctifying grace of remission expurges all or none. Hence the importance of basing our sorrow upon such general motives as the fear of hell, the loss of heaven, the ingratitude shown to our loving Redeemer, the infinite goodness of God, etc.; these will cover all even sins that may have been forgotten. And since the general maxim affirming that no sin can be remitted without sorrow of the sinner for its commission, applies also to venial sins, it is right to admonish virtuous persons of the strict necessity of exciting earnest sorrow for even these; otherwise they shall not be forgiven. Mortal sins previously remitted may be profitably recalled to mind, and sorrow for them be renewed, and the confession of them be placed under the sentence of abolution. David, the Penitent, never ceased to keep the memory of his "always before him," and to cry out to God, "Wash me yet more and more from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin" (Psalm 50).

5th. And finally, our sorrow must be formal. Implied sorrow is not sufficient for the Sacrament of Penance. A perfect act of the love of God and unobediently implies sorrow for having grievously offended Him; but the Sacramental law requires explicit sorrow for the sins we confess and ask pardon for in the tribunal of mercy. In view of the liability of our people to accidents and sudden attacks of illness, it is important to instruct the faithful, and even the most illiterate should receive this instruction, that an act of perfect contrition, or of perfect love of God, suffices for pardon of all sins, how grievous soever; and accordingly, should any one be in danger of dying before the arrival of a priest, he should be solicitous, above all things, to dispose himself by acts of faith, hope, charity and contrition for reconciliation with his offended Maker through the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Any friends, or other Catholics, who may be near the sick person, ought to aid him in making this preparation for death. It is assumed that every dying Catholic has the desire of confessing his sins and the intention of doing so, if the priest arrives in time. But it is of supreme importance to teach what all Catholics may not know, that the act of contrition for sin, or of charity towards God, suffices for forgiveness outside the sacramental tribunal only when it is what the Church calls perfect contrition or per-

fect charity, that is, when it is founded upon the motive of faith exhibiting God to us, not only as a good and bountiful Father to us, but as "infinitely good and perfect in Himself" and, as such, "most worthy of all our love" for His own sake.

CONDITIONS OF FIRM PURPOSE OF AMENDMENT.

This indispensable disposition of the sinner's soul for pardon, is a consecration of genuine sorrow and detestation of sin, and is so intimately bound up with it, that any essential defect in the purpose of amendment is an evidence of defective sorrow. In affairs of daily life our grief over any calamity and detestation of the cause of it, naturally include a firm purpose of avoiding in the future the voluntary occasions that would lead to its recurrence. So it ought likewise to be in regard of sin, the greatest of all evils. Hence our purpose of amendment must be firm, a kind of self-imposed decree, absolutely guarding us with all the strength of our will against a return to our evil ways under any condition of circumstances—not a passing sentiment that rests lightly on the surface of the soul, and disappears, like a morning vapour, under the influence of passion's vital heat, or the temporary temptation. Such a purpose is ineffective. Temptation will return. Passion is sure to be aroused in some unguarded moment, when "the unclean spirit" shall come "with seven other spirits more wicked than himself" to take possession anew of the home from which he had been ejected by grace and penance. If a penitent's purpose of amendment be effective, he will limit himself to general resolves, but will vigorously embrace the practical methods of assurance against relapse,—the daily discipline of piety and prayer and flight of occasions of sin, the preparation of the souls for temptation, clothing itself in the armour of God by faith and holy fear and Sacramental nourishment and judicious choice of books and companions and places of resort. The sinner who trusts to the effectiveness of his spirit in the first joy of restoration to his Father's home, and eschews particular and practical measures of precaution, is almost sure to relapse in the hour of sudden temptation, and his purpose of amendment cannot be regarded as effective, nor his sorrow sincere. 3rd. It must be universal, safeguarding his virtue not only against relapse into his former sins, but against the sins and vices to which his way of life may anywise expose him. No special tenderness must be shown to any darling vice, no mental reservation, no dalliance with danger. Henceforth God is all and all for God. Blessed is the man to whom shall be vouchsafed the grace of sorrow for sin and abiding purpose of amendment in accordance with the foregoing conditions. He shall be counted among the glorious army of penitents, soldiers of conquering grace, in the kingdom of heaven, and shall join in the eternal triumph of David and Peter and the crucified thief that went straight to Paradise, and Magdalen and Mary of Egypt and Augustine, the son of Monica, and millions of others destined to show forth the power of Grace to raise up the fallen and wounded, and to renew them in strength to combat again and overcome the forces of the world, the devil and the flesh of corruption.

SELF-CHASTISEMENT IS PART OF PENANCE.

Satisfaction is due to God by the sinner for his willful insults to the Divine Majesty. It is the innate sense of this debt, that regular exercise of the will, even from the most holy penitents, whose sins have been most sorely forgiven, that makes all who believe in His ruling Providence accept their personal and domestic afflictions as sent by God on account of their transgressions, "to wash them more and more from their iniquity and cleanse them from their sin" (Psalm 50). The first parents were restored to grace, and set the chastisements of God, have fallen heavily on them and their posterity. Moses and Aaron offered, though not grievously, and were assured of God's forgiveness; nevertheless they were punished by exclusion from the land of promise. The Prophet Nathan was sent by the Lord to announce to King David the pardon of his crime, and in the same breath to proclaim the hard decree of justice, that severe atonement shall be demanded of him; "For this thing the child that is born to thee shall surely die" (2 Kings, 12 ch.). Thus, it is God's ordinance, that the remission of the guilt of our sin and the eternal penalty proportioned to it, does not always imply total immunity from the law of expiation; but that a debt of inferior or temporary punishment is reserved against the reserved criminal in the order of divine justice, by way of personal atonement for personal offence. The voluntary infliction of pains and penalties on ourselves because of our transgressions, is represented everywhere in Holy Writ as a sure means of not only liquidating the debt of temporary punishment that may lie against us after the remission of capital guilt and its expiation, but as a propitiation beforehand and an assured method of averting the Divine wrath from the sinner and obtaining forgiveness. The essence of Penance is indeed contrition of heart and firm purpose of amendment; this is the return of the erring soul to the Lord God, in trust of His mercy "through the redemption, which is" (and was from the beginning) "in Christ Jesus." Self-punishment only gives integrity to Penance. Nevertheless, so thoroughly is self-chastisement identified with true conversion to God, that the Greek word used generally in Scripture to denote this conversion, although it signifies etymologically no more than a change of mind, has been invariably employed by the penmen of the Holy Ghost, and by the earliest translators of the Bible, and by classical authors, Pagan in the Pagan times, and Christian in the Christian times, to denote what is rigidly termed Penance, or penal atonement, as distinguished from repentance. The divine mandate, "Do penance," means

always, "Be converted to God in your hearts; be firmly resolved to sin no more; afflict your souls and bodies for atonement to the offended majesty of the Lord God."

PENITENTIAL FASTING IN THE PRE CHRISTIAN AGES.

Thus we read that under the Patriarchal dispensation, Job, the holiest and wisest of the Gentiles, "did penance in dust and ashes" for atonement of his un wisdom of speech, and exhorted his friends to do likewise (Job. 22, 42). The Mosaic Dispensation required the Israelites to do "penance" for transgression, and delivered an "everlasting ordinance" concerning the annual day of expiation and cleansing from all sin; "you shall afflict your souls, and shall do no work" (Levit. 16 ch.). To turn aside God's anger, Josue "rent his garments, and fell flat on the ground before the Ark of the Lord until the evening" (Josh. 7 ch.). The Mosaic Dispensation required the Israelites to do "penance" for transgression, and delivered an "everlasting ordinance" concerning the annual day of expiation and cleansing from all sin; "you shall afflict your souls, and shall do no work" (Levit. 16 ch.). 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