

The Catholic Record

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THE PEACE OF GOD AND THE TRUCE OF GOD

Amid the charges and counter charges not only of breaches of international law, but of atrocious crimes against humanity, a world sickened with slaughter and wrenched with national justifications is beginning dimly to realize the need of some recognized organ which might at once give voice and guidance to the conscience of Christian civilization.

It is especially interesting at this time to cast a glance over the past when the Church subdued the barbarous instincts of the half-savage feudal lords and laid the foundations of peace and public order from which a civilized Europe evolved.

At the Synod held at Charroux in 989, Gunbald, Archbishop of Bordeaux, in the name of the assembled bishops, pronounced anathema on "those who break into churches, those who rob the poor, and those who strike a clerk."

In the beginning of the eleventh century the impulse of the Pax Dei resulted in a great movement to abolish war altogether but unhappily there

was no machinery for enforcing this "holy peace," and recognizing that they were asking too much from human nature of that period the ecclesiastical authorities in France wisely modified their demands.

By 1041 the Truce of God had been recognized to such an extent that several bishops and abbots issued a joint edict in which all men were commanded to maintain a holy and unbroken peace from vespertide on Wednesday to sunrise on Monday

In 1139, adopted by the Second Lateran Council, the Truce of God was extended to the whole Church, thus becoming a definite article of Canon Law, and, for the rest, it remained as a recognized principle until such time as other rising forces had sufficient power to attain the same end by different means.

It was dependent often for its enforcement on local bishops; and in the eleventh century it was not uncommon for the bishop to secure the cooperation of representative men from all classes of society in forming leagues of peace throughout the diocese.

Of course the Church was not able always and everywhere to secure absolute obedience to its decrees, but as Father Robinson says: "In the long run, the ceaseless efforts of the Church in one form or another to secure peace were by no means without result."

"Times have changed, conditions have changed; and when we speak of the influence of the Church being sadly weakened by the divisions of Christianity we do not suggest the restoration of the conditions of a thousand years ago, nor even of a few centuries ago. The infinite adaptability of the Church of God to the conditions of the past, and in spite of partial failure at times its never-failing influence in promoting peace and order and Christian charity amongst individuals and nations is one of the great facts that in the light of present conditions will receive the serious consideration of earnest students of history."

PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

Representative government might deserve less adverse criticism if it were more representative. We have reached a certain stage of arrested development in choosing our representatives and many seem to think that the resultant inequity is properly chargeable against the representative system.

that affect. Besides being untrue such criticism is futile; it leads nowhere. We have lots of that sort of stuff from the regular political parties who seem to think they advance their own cause by unmeasured denunciation of each other.

Is there no practical remedy available? We believe that much of what is objectionable in present conditions would be eliminated by giving the people fair and just representation.

Take another example with exact statistics. In 1908 Quebec sent 53 Liberals, 11 Conservatives and one Independent, to the House of Commons. The popular vote was: Liberals 158,898; Conservatives 129,684.

Accidental majorities in arbitrary electoral divisions determine the country's policy, and give one party an altogether unduly large representation, while leaving the other with unfair and inadequate representation.

The remedy is proportional representation. It is not an untried scheme; it has worked satisfactorily in Belgium and elsewhere. In France a couple of years ago the greatest and most patriotic men in French public life advocated this means of making the Chamber of Deputies really representative.

The party in power with us derives the great advantage from the present system and there is little hope of patriotism rising above party in the matter.

It is, therefore, with a great deal of pleasure, that we read the letter of Mr. Justice Idington to the Ottawa Board of Trade suggesting proportional representation as an effective means of securing the better government of the Capital.

The letter reads as follows: "I observe in the public press that your board proposes to discuss tonight a number of organic changes looking to the improvement of the city's government."

"The ward system might advantageously be abolished entirely. Under proportional representation any candidate, receiving the quota of votes to be determined by dividing the total votes cast, by the number of members to be elected, would be chosen."

"Any one or more leading business men might under such a system feel reasonably sure of election for some years without the waste of his precious time in begging leave to serve. They would thus be encouraged to devote themselves to the public service without a needless sacrifice of time, and when they had done their share could fall out conscious of having done their duty, and their fitting successors would the more easily be found under such a system."

"And if any section of the city, or citizens, should desire above all things representation only of their race, religion or party, they could reasonably hope to achieve that result proportionate to their number."

"If thought undesirable to abolish the ward system, yet desirable to reduce the number of aldermen to less than three for each ward, I admit proportional representation could not be used for aldermen's elections unless indeed, two or more wards were grouped together."

"But even in the case of single representation for a ward the preferential, alternative feature of the proportional representation system could be advantageously adopted in the most cases of three men running for one seat."

"Mr. Hong in his recent address explaining proportional representation to people here, made clear the details I have not entered upon."

FATHER CANNING

To many, very many, the news of Father Canning's death will come with a sense of deep personal loss, for many were the friends that Hugh Canning grappled with his soul with hoops of steel.

Father Canning was a man of sterling worth whose probity and integrity of character were widely recognized.

Speaking from the same platform as Mr. Asquith, Bonar Law said: "Such a combination would be useless, and perhaps worse than useless, except as a means to a combination of the nation—a nation organized from top to bottom for the purpose of ending this war."

All this is not a matter for regret, much less a reason for losing hope; rather is it an evidence of the national realization of the magnitude of the task yet to be accomplished.

ABOUT BOOKS AND READERS

We have said that there are certain books, even "best sellers," which should never be found in the hands of Catholics. Many of them are morally unclean.

A COALITION CABINET

The dramatic suddenness of the fall of the Asquith Government must make all thinking men realize that this is a solemn moment in the history of the British Empire.

"The Admiralty had something to do with precipitating the crisis; it is difficult to believe, however, that these are anything but surface indications of wholly unsatisfactory conditions. Kitchener's has long been a name to conjure with; now it is quite plainly intimated that Kitchener has failed."

The failure in the Dardanelles is blamed on Churchill. A Canadian Press Despatch, May 19th, reads:

"Lord Fisher, it is now said, from the outset opposed the project to attack the Dardanelles until the assault could be made with the support of a powerful land force. He was overruled summarily, however, and in the view of military and naval critics has served amply to justify him."

"The fleet was beaten off with heavy losses and the ensuing delay served the German-led Turks to strengthen their defenses that when the army under Sir Ian Hamilton arrived it found a thoroughly warned and fortified enemy and, although fighting with wonderful heroism and suffering terrible losses, has been able to make but little headway."

The breakdown of the Russian Carpathian campaign adds to the general gloom. The uniform, not to say exaggerated, optimism of the English correspondents at Petrograd is notorious.

"As the result of the latest German tactics all that had been accomplished by the Russians in the Carpathians has been undone and months have been added to the duration of the war."

The leading Russian military authority suggests that the Germans intend to follow up their success with an advance on Warsaw, but for this they will need more troops than they can muster as long as the present activity on the western front continues.

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THE CHARACTER OF THE DUTCH PEOPLE

THE CHARACTER OF THE DUTCH people may in this juncture not unfittingly form the subject of a short meditation. What was for three centuries looked upon as a Calvinistic stronghold has by a striking reversal of history, as we have some where read, become not only fruitful soil for the nurture of Catholic ideals, but a conspicuous recruiting ground for the Church's auxiliaries in carrying the Faith to heathen nations.

NOT SO MANY years ago Holland was regarded as hopelessly Lutheran and even educated Catholics in this country may yet be heard to express surprise when the Church in the little Dutch Kingdom is described as vigorously alive and in an advanced stage of expansiveness.

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moon struck heroine of the "popular" novels is to be "too serious," than the books worth while are too serious. But life itself is a serious matter.

That is what makes his work truly great. The world does not want to think about its soul, and hence it prefers the writers that ignore it. But Catholics are supposed to believe in the soul, and hence they should have nothing in common with semi-pagan purveyors of printed filth.

THE NEWS THAT Holland is to re-assert its independence and create reserves numbering 1,000,000 men directs attention anew to that sturdy little Kingdom which Germany has ever regarded with a jealous eye.

THE PRESENT kingdom of the Netherlands since 1830 is made up of eleven provinces. In the northern and central provinces Protestants preponderate by more than three to one. The Catholic strength lies in North Brabant and Limburg which are overwhelmingly of the Faith, and it is in these districts that the foreign missionary activity alluded to at the outset finds its congenial home.

CARDINAL O'CONNELL ON PRESIDENT'S SPEECH

AT THE State Convention of the K. of C. of Massachusetts held in Boston recently, His eminence Cardinal O'Connell took occasion to refer in terms of high praise to the speech which President Wilson had delivered on the preceding evening in Philadelphia.

It is, further, refreshing to learn that notwithstanding the meagre Catholic population of a little over two million all these periodicals are well supported and, for the most part, on a paying financial basis.

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