

Catholic Toleration.

A correspondent of the *Inter Ocean* of Sept. 10, 1891 has this to say: Apropos of Catholic toleration in the Maryland Colony, the following bit of history from the Hon. R. W. Thompson's work: "The papacy and the civil power," will be found to be exceedingly interesting:

Referring to "Historical Tracts," collected and printed by Peter Force, Washington City, 1838, the author (Thompson) on page 682, et seq., says:

"After speaking of the seizure and confiscation of vessels belonging to the Virginians, who had been trading with the natives of Maryland for a number of years, under proper and legal authority derived from their colonial government, and the invalidity of the Maryland charter, which it was alleged Lord Baltimore had obtained by falsely representing the country as unsettled, it thus speaks of the Roman Catholic colonists.

"And professing an establishment of the Roman religion only, they suppressed the poor Protestants among them, and carried on the whole frame of their government in the Lord Proprietary's name; all their proceeding, judicature, trials and warrants in his name, power and dignity, and from him only; not the least mention of the sovereign authority of England in all their government; to that purpose forcibly imposing oaths (judged illegal in a report made by a committee of the Council of State, 1652) to maintain his royal jurisdiction, prerogatives, and dominions, as absolute Lord and Proprietary, to protect chiefly the Roman Catholic religion in the free exercise thereof; and all done by yearly instructions from him out of England, as if he had been absolute Prince and King. (Extract from Peter Force's *Historical Tracts*, p. 5.)

"There is no difficulty in seeing the object and precise nature of the oaths prescribed by Lord Baltimore for all officers and citizens, when it is considered that both by the laws of England and those existing in the colony at the time of his settlement, the English Episcopal was the established church. And while the practice of religious toleration was compulsory, being provided for in the charter, it is undoubtedly true that these oaths were especially designed to give undue preference to the Roman Catholic colonists—a preference destructive of the equality which the charter was designed to establish. This is one of the requirements:

"And I do further swear I will not by myself, nor any other person directly, trouble, molest, or discountenance any person whatsoever in the said province professing to believe in Jesus Christ, and in particular no Roman Catholic, for or in respect of his or her religion, or his or her free exercise thereof within the said province, so as they be not unfaithful to his said lordship, or molest or conspire against the civil government established under him." (Ref. to "Historical Tracts," pp. 23, 24, 26.)

"We must necessarily look to the character of the civil government established by Lord Baltimore in order to ascertain the obligations imposed by this oath. The oath of fidelity to him

required that he should be acknowledged 'to be the true and absolute lord and proprietary' of the colony; that 'true faith' should be rendered to him and his heirs, and that his and their 'rights, title, interest, privileges, royal jurisdiction, prerogative, propriety and dominion over' the colony should be maintained. (Ref. *ibid.*, p. 25.) Here was a manifest attempt to substitute his own royal power for that of the King, to whom all the original colonists were ready and willing to pay obedience. But the same is further shown by the commissions writs, and processes that were issued. The law of England required all those to issue in the name of the 'Keepers of the Liberty of England;' but, in disobedience of this requirement, they were issued in his name—a clear usurpation of royal jurisdiction and dominion. (Ref. to "Historical Tracts," p. 10.) The plan of government constructed by means of these usurped powers and prerogatives became such that the Protestant inhabitants of the colony who were loyal to England could not conscientiously take this oath, because it imposed the obligation of violating the law of the mother country. Whether that law was right or wrong it is not now necessary to be inquired into; it was in accordance with the spirit of that, though not of the present age. It prescribed the line of duty for all English citizens, whether at home or in the colonies, and these Maryland colonists by violating it would have been subjected to prosecutions for sedition and treason. All this Baltimore knew perfectly well, and therefore prescribed an oath of fidelity to himself of such a nature that a loyal Protestant could not take it, being well assured, at the same time, that the Roman Catholics would all do so. And to show the little favor he was disposed to exhibit toward those who should refuse—if indeed he did not design to drive out the Protestants entirely—he caused a proclamation to be issued to the effect 'that all such persons so refusing shall be forever debarred from any right or claim to the lands they now enjoy and live on;' that is, their property should be confiscated; and his Lordship's Governor was instructed to cause the said lands to be entered, and seized upon to his Lordship's use.' (Ref. "Historical Tracts," p. 35.)

"As might well be supposed, the results were just what Lord Baltimore designed they should be, and are fully set forth in this tract. Papists and priests and Jesuits flocked into the colony. Papist Governors and counselors dedicated to St. Ignatius, filled the offices. The Protestants were miserably disturbed in the exercise of their religion.' A number of 'illegal executions and murders' occurred. There were 'imprisonments, confiscations of many men's estates, and of widows and orphans,' to the destruction of many families.' Those who would not take the oath were disarmed and plundered. 'Popish officers' were appointed, 'outring those' who were previously in office. 'Lands and plantations' were seized and confiscated. And it can not fail to arrest attention that all these persecutions were visited upon Protestants, while not one Roman Catholic suffered from them. (Ref. 'Historical Tracts,' pp. 12, 13, 16, 30, 31.) As for these,

they were so favored that if one of them was called 'Papish priest, jesuite, jesuited papist,' etc., the offender forfeited a penalty of '£10.' (Ref. 'Historical Tracts,' p. 27.)

"The inferior position occupied by layman in those days should relieve them from any responsibility for these measures. The civil authority of the colony was entirely in the hands of those appointed by Lord Baltimore, who, as it appears, selected Roman Catholic agents exclusively. At that time, in England, the papists were chiefly under the influence of the Jesuits whose vigilance was too sleepless to permit this opportunity of planting their society in the New World to escape them. How far they had the sympathy and support of Lord Baltimore is of course not known; but it is undoubtedly true that they were the authors of all these measures in the Maryland colony, and that they had pretty much their own way there. This appears from a narrative preserved in the Jesuit college at Rome, which is also found among the "Historical Tracts" above referred to. It was prepared by the Jesuit fathers appointed by the superior general of the order at Rome, to superintend the first emigration of Roman Catholic colonists who left England in the fall of 1633. They went, as it is declared, to 'carry the light of the gospel and of truth where it has been found out that hitherto no knowledge of the true God has shown'—that is, where neither the pope nor popery had been heard of. History has amply shown the kind of light they throw upon the pathway of nations as well as individuals, and the events in the Maryland colony show that they acted there, as everywhere else, under instructions from Rome. 'Bull's, letters, etc., from the pope and Rome'—that is from the pope and the general of the Jesuits—became familiar to the colonists. (Ref. to 'Historical Tracts,' p. 12.) By means of these the Jesuits became omnipotent in the colony, and in the tract last named they show how unsuccessfully they exercised their power. Then, as now, the first object of the order was the acquisition of wealth with the right to govern and control their property without any reference or obedience to the laws of the country in which they reside. On this subject Father White, one of the Jesuits, reports that when they set up this claim in Maryland they were met by those who insisted that the laws of England, which bound the colony, forbade it; and he speaks of them as those 'who, too intent upon their own affairs, have not feared to violate the immunities of the church by using their endeavors that laws of this kind formerly passed

in England and unjustly observed there may obtain like force here, to wit: That it shall not be lawful for any person or community, even ecclesiastical, in any wise, even by gift, to acquire or possess, any land, unless the permission of the civil magistrate first be obtained; which thing, when our people declared it to be repugnant to the laws of the church, two priests were sent from England who might teach the contrary.' And then, in order to show his superior what admirable success he had in resisting this unjust English law and how all-powerful the order had already become in America he continues: 'But the reverse of what was expected happened; for our reasons being heard and the thing itself being more clearly understood, they easily fell in with our opinion, and the laity in like manner generally.' (Ref. to Father Andrew White, etc.) And thus the Jesuits won their first triumph in the United States. The two priests sent over from England to demonstrate the necessity of obeying the British law, was easily converted, the laity were unresisting; the law was trampled under their feet; and they were allowed to acquire, hold, and govern their own property with impunity, and without any responsibility to the civil power. This is precisely the claim now set up by the American hierarchy at the Second National Council at Baltimore, who have again revived, and upon the same soil, the old Jesuit demand of nearly two centuries and a half ago.

"Whatsoever, then, was done in the colony of Maryland in favor of religious toleration was done only in obedience to the charter, and against the known and steady policy both of the church of Rome and the Jesuits."

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