

A REASONABLE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

(General Intention for August Blessed by the Sovereign Pontiff.)

In the inspired text the Great Apostle calls the Gospel and the life of the first Christians built upon it, a "reasonable service." By this note He would have it distinguished from the absurdities of idolatry and the superstition of paganism. He points to it in the life He Himself had led in the midst and set as an example. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever modest, whatsoever just, whatsoever holy, whatsoever lovely, whatsoever of good fame, if there be any virtue, if any praise of discipline, think on these things. The things which you have learned and received and heard and seen in me these do ye." (Philip iv, 8.) The Catholic Church has ever taught this same lesson and upheld this same standard. Her bitter fight through the ages has been against exaggeration in every form, but especially in doctrine and practice—to keep her children in the golden mean furthest removed from error on one side and on the other.

IN HER DOGMAS—Heresy is but the exaggeration of a truth unto denial of another which is equally part of divine revelation; and sectarian creeds and communions, the farther they stray from infallible guidance, the more deeply bear the stigma of unreasonableness in their belief, their profession and action upon mankind. Liberalism is worse still, inasmuch as it stretches reason and liberty beyond all bounds unto the rejection of revelation and divine law. Yet both heresy and free thought claim for themselves a monopoly of reason and are loud in declaring Catholicism, through the yoke of faith and discipline which it imposes, to be the destruction of reason. The angel of darkness transforms himself into an angel of light the better to deceive and enslave.

Certainly, the dogmas of faith contain mysteries which are above the comprehension of reason, but not one of them has ever been shown to be contrary to it. They elevate and strengthen reason with the aid of a supernatural light, and thus enlarge its field and perfect its vision. It might as well be said that glasses and telescopes destroy the eyesight because they lift the vision to a thousand objects it would otherwise fail to reach, to countless and measureless orbs in the vastness of space, otherwise lost to view. Nothing can be more reasonable than what perfects reason and equips it for its highest purposes. Religion without mystery could never reach its end—mystery man to God. It could not lift the mind of man up to Him who dwelleth in light inaccessible nor bring down God to the mind of man. Especially without mysteries there could be no supernatural life, no grace nor glory, no heaven. Hence those sects which reject a revealed religion or, what is almost the same thing, an infallible religious authority, either fall into innumerable contradictions of classing and ever changing creeds, into the tolerance of fanaticism, such vagaries, as Christian Science, spiritualism, theosophy or reading their own ideas into the Scriptures, expunge from it all mystery and settle down to a religion of sentiment and mundane respectability devoid of supernatural character. Coherence of truth with truth, of principle with consequence, a perspective that assigns to each its place and marks its due relationship to the whole and every part are the character, of only one, and that a revealed religion, which is therefore eminently reasonable.

IN HER PROFESSION, what is true of the Catholic dogma is still more striking in Catholic profession. Its very enemies admire the consistency of its practice, the harmony of its laws and institutions, its round of regular and constant observances—prayers, sacrifice, sacraments, feasts and fasts, the very devotions in which the church with a familiar broad-mindedness leaves a certain latitude of individuals and even national tastes, all with a marvellous insight into human nature and an admirable knowledge of the human heart are adapted to the end proposed in divine worship. The lex orandi or rule of prayer is a perfect reflection and full expression of the lex credendi or rule of faith.

And it is in this respect especially that Catholic profession is eminently reasonable. In true religion what is outward and visible has worth and meaning only so far forth as it

is the expression of the interior and the invisible, or is conducive to it. This is the adoration "in spirit and truth" by which our Lord in the Gospel tells us "all true adorers shall adore the father." False sects and counterfeit religions either cut off all external forms and manifestations, thus starving the spirit, or they degenerate into fantastic exhibitions with sensationalism in word, style and conduct. What a gamut there is between "high and dry" Churchism and the Salvation Army drum, though all claim the same Gospel. Their very penance and austerities, if they adopt any, are meaningless in their rigor, exaggerated and cruel, shorn of useful aim or lofty purpose. Some there are who outwardly make much of the cross, but inwardly "deny the power thereof." They erect the cross on the top of their churches, they fast and abstain at certain times, but within they worship their private judgment; they harbor a spirit of disobedience and rebellion, they look self-denial in judgment, will and conduct, the very opposite of St. Paul, who desired to know but "Christ crucified."

True religion in its practice as well as in its dogmas, though it admits nothing against reason, yet sanctions much that is above it. The Apostle calls his Gospel the foolishness of preaching, as in another place he speaks of the folly of the cross. "We preach Christ crucified; unto the Jews indeed a stumbling block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness." "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, which is hidden, which none of the princes of this world knew." (I Cor., ii, 7). Coming to save the world, not only the truths which Christ taught, but the example which He set dazed the eyes of men by its very splendor. They had become vain in their conceits and their foolish heart was darkened. For "the god of this world hath blinded the minds of unbelievers, that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not shine into them." (II Cor., iv, 4). But all who have learned Christ, received His truth, and strive to conform to it in their lives, find in the cross the highest wisdom. The height of sanctity is also the height of reason.

IN HER INTERIOR LIFE—But nowhere do we find this higher reasonableness, the perfect accord of man's rational nature, mind, heart and senses, with the teaching and exercise of faith as in the interior life sanctioned and approved by the Church. Though grounded in the Gospel and striving to copy the example of Christ, it admits nothing contrary to the dictates of good sense. Not that it does not often run counter to flesh and blood and to the spirit of the world, for the sensual man perceiveth not the things that are of the Spirit of God; but it is ever in accord with sound judgment unclouded by passion or prejudice, unhampered by earthly desires and interests. All approved asceticism and safe spiritual direction aim at freeing the soul from these obstacles to a good choice and a wise selection of means. It is only when her vision is thus unclouded that she can receive a higher enlightenment and detect true inspirations to loftier paths. The Church has always condemned the extravagances of certain mystics, who, under pretence of following the lights of the Holy Ghost, incline to oddity of life and singularity of behaviour. No ascetic system has received such marks of her approval as the Exercises of St. Ignatius, in which the light of reason blends in perfect harmony with the light of grace, the natural with the supernatural, to build up together a perfect and reasonable Christian life. In the all-important matter of the choice of a state of life, no notice is taken of an inspiration that conflicts with rules of prudence or the dictates of sound sense. Here we find the golden mean between the two extremes—the rationalist, denying all intervention of the supernatural, and the false mystic, setting at naught reason and common sense. It is the reasonable Christian who, while he lends ear to the interior voice of the Spirit, which he supplicates by prayer, employs all the precious faculties and gifts with which God has adorned his soul to discover and fulfil the Divine will. He obeys His Creator, he strives to copy His Redeemer, not blindly like a machine, but with all

the same energy of his free and intelligent soul.

During the month of August, in union with our prayers, good works and sufferings, offered to the Divine Heart for His intentions, let us keep particularly in view this one: that all Christians may honor God with the reasonable service of an enlightened faith.—Rev. J. J. C. in the Canadian Messenger of the Sacred Heart.

FACES OF THE AGED.

Have you ever noticed, as you journey through life, the different aspects of the faces of the aged? Some are hardened and dissatisfied; others, serene and happy. What is the cause of the difference? It will not do to say that life for the former has been harsh, full of care and sorrow, for this is the common lot of all, and frequently the latter have known more sorrow and disappointment. We must look a little deeper and then we will realize that the mental attitude each takes towards life writes itself on the countenance. A woman passes us on the street and the lines of discontent and bitterness on her face tell the story of her life—she was lacking in philosophy or religion and the troubles she encountered killed the sweet flowers of hopefulness, courage and affection in her heart, and sowed the seeds of bitterness and repining. We think that we should not care to have to spend our lives under the roof that shelters her, for there is no worse foe to domestic felicity than a cynical person. We meet another woman and we feel ourselves insensibly drawn towards her. Her face, notwithstanding her 60 years, has a fresh look, and the sweet smile is never far away from her lips. Yet, if you knew that woman's history, you would marvel that she has been able to endure it at all. What was her strength under all this? Question her and she will either say that "We can not help the troubles that come to us, and worrying over them only makes matters worse for us and for all concerned," or that old expression of trust in the rulings of Divine Providence, "God wills it!" Many of my readers are young now; time is but beginning to write their annals on their faces. Do you want to wear, when you are old, the tranquil brow, the tender smile and hopeful eyes? Then make your claim for them to-day by refusing to indulge in acrimonious words, the bitter thoughts, the cynical smile, by resolving to bear the cares that rest upon you with a brave trustful heart, and by resolutely turning to the bright aspect of every situation. Every cloud has a bright side, though sometimes we do not see even the edge of its shining, yet it is there. So with the clouds that obscure our happiness, and we should wait in confidence until the appointed time, when we shall see the purpose of the sorrow that all but crushed us. That time is often long in coming, but it always comes.

"Then gaze until thou canst see
The glimmer of the star."
Ruth Rollins in the "Boys' Friend."

COLLEGE SOCIALISM.

In our modern days colleges are becoming too much the nurseries of sport, of that innocent kind of gambling that takes insidiously possession of the mind, and that finally develops a taste that may some day find its logical or natural consequences on the race course or on the stock exchange. There seems to be also a very Socialistic tendency in this direction in the institutions of the higher educational kind. We do not refer exactly to Catholic Colleges and universities, for they are always

controlled by a certain discipline and have as a basis the fundamental principles of religion; and these constitute a shield against more dangerous tendencies. But in the higher non-Catholic institutions there is a tendency that must inevitably end in the creation of a generation of men, whose minds will rebel, more or less, against authority, and will run riot in the field of secularism. The Chicago Chronicle, dealing with this subject, has some very pertinent remarks and among others we would quote the following, which is deserving of closer attention than it may at first warrant:

"One of the strangest of the educational manifestations of the day is the extent to which the facilities of some universities and colleges of the country are inoculated with one or other of the various socialistic notions. It is noticeable that there seems a direct relationship between this fact and the youthfulness of the men who fill the professorial chairs. Nearly all of those who have promulgated these opinions and argued in support of them are young men. Various causes have combined to multiply these institutions, and the demand for instructors has been so great that it has been often necessary to meet it with men intellectually less matured than those who formerly attained professorial rank."

"It is well that all new theories of politics or society shall be studied by men in these high educational positions, but it is not well that they should enter on the advocacy of any doctrine until after exhaustive examination. That their opinions in this case are crude and erratic is obvious from the fact that socialistic theories are not a logical evolution from the lines on which civilization has grown, but are directly and radically subversive of all past development. On the other hand, the educational institutions of civilization generally represent civilization's highest development, those of our country representing it under the democratic principles on which our government rests. They should not be incubators for hatching out novel opinion, but laboratories where all opinion should be analyzed in the light of what civilization is and not of what it might be if men could be created anew."

SPECTATORS AT BASEBALL.

Richard O'Donnell, aged 11, died at an hospital in Pittsburgh, recently, from injuries received during a game of baseball. He was the mascot of one of the teams, and was standing near the catcher watching the progress of a game, when he was struck by a foul ball which fractured his skull.



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Society Directory.

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ST. PATRICK'S T. A. AND B. SOCIETY.—Meets on the second Sunday of every month in St. Patrick's Hall, 92 St. Alexander street, at 8.30 p.m. Committee of Management meets in same hall on the first Tuesday of every month at 8 p.m. Rev. Director, Rev. Jas. E. Loran; President, W. P. Doyle; Recording Secretary, J. Kahala; Corresponding Secretary, T. P. Tansey.

ST. ANN'S T. A. & B. SOCIETY, established 1868.—Rev. Director, Rev. Father McPhail; President, D. Gallery, M.P.; Sec., J. F. Quinn, 625 St. Dominique street; M. J. Ryan, treasurer, 18 St. Augustin street. Meets on the second Sunday of every month, in St. Ann's Hall, corner Young and Ottawa streets, at 8.30 p.m.

ST. ANN'S YOUNG MEN'S SOCIETY, organized 1885.—Meets in its hall, 157 Ottawa street, on the first Sunday of each month, at 2.30 p.m. Spiritual Adviser, Rev. E. Strubbe, C.S.S.R.; President, P. Keshan; Treasurer, Thomas O'Connell; Rec.-Sec., Robt. J. Hart.

C.M.B.A. OF CANADA, BRANCH 26.—(Organized 18th November, 1875.—Branch 26 meets at St. Patrick's Hall, 92 St. Alexander St., on every Monday of each month. The regular meetings for the transaction of business are held on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month, at 8 p.m. Spiritual Adviser, Rev. M. Callaghan; Chancellor, P. J. Darcy; President, W. F. Wall; Recording Secretary, P. C. McDonagh, 189 Visitation street; Financial Secretary, Jas. J. Conigan, 325 St. Urban street; Treasurer, J. H. Kelly; Medical Adviser, Drs. H. J. Harrison, E. J. O'Connor and G. H. Merrill.

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"No, Mr. St. Clair, I could not say that."

"There are reasons which I cannot explain."

"Is it on account of any fault in me?"

"No. As a friend I have ever loved you in the highest esteem."

"Thank you for that, Miss Cecelia. Your words assure me of your love at least. But—" he hesitated.

"Have you any objection to my loving you if I have a rival?"

"None on earth," she replied slowly.

"None on earth! What do you mean?" he asked respectfully.

"That you once had a lover whose name is dead you have seen yourself to live alone?"

He could not see the smile which she answered, "No."

"Remember her strange words many other things connected with which had often greatly pained me."

"They were soon at the hotel, and she was bidding her to come too soon to please Cecelia."

"He asked if he should remain before her departure, and she replied that she feared he intended starting for home the next day."

"But you will remember Cecelia?"

"Yes, as a friend who has most kind to me in my wanderings."

"Is it really true, as the words say, that you have complete management with us and we know no more?"

"It is, and I am happy to say my voice has been heard for some time on the stage."

"You mean to remain at home?"

"Yes, for a time, but not permanently according to my present intention."

"Have you any objections calling if I happen to be in the city?"

"As a friend I shall be pleased to see you if I am at home."

"Thank you for that much Cecelia."

Not wishing to trust himself to meet her again on the morrow, he bade her good-bye at the door, wishing her a safe home. Then he went to his solitary room and retired, to sleep. He who less than a year ago had declared that he never marry was suffering from disappointment in his fast love, for he felt that such had gone from his life which was not to be replaced.

"How good it is to be in dear home once more!" Cecelia's bright face fully verified words addressed to her cousin day of her arrival.

"You are no happier to be in Cecelia, than we are to have her been dreadfully lonely."

"Thank you, Agnes. I am selfish enough to be glad that I have been missed; but would my cousin say if I go away again soon and not return?"

"What do you mean, Cecelia? Agnes, in surprise."

Cecelia smiled a mysterious and said: "Never mind, dear, and do not worry about it. I am ready to go."

"You do not contemplate going to the stage, I hope, though I should blame you if you did."

"I have within a few months. Even if you did not enough for us to let us hear your opinion of you, we let the same. Besides, we wrote to us, we have been following your career through papers, and often your mother myself have wished that we at the theatre to witness triumph."

"The admiration of the public, of little worth. One may be praised by many tomorrow a new star appears attraction of yesterday is forgotten."

"Preaching again, Cecelia, you used to do when we were in school. I thought that new life you would get over."