

TO A CHRISTIAN SCIENTIST.

INTERESTING LETTER OF A LAY CATHOLIC—EXPLAINS CHURCH'S POSITION.

Catholic Universe. The following letters, received by one of the local pastors from an old parishioner who has been in Europe for several years on account of ill-health, fully explain itself and will be interesting and useful to many of our readers on account of its excellent "lay" argument against the claims of the Christian Scientists, and its lucid explanation of Catholic faith:

R—, March 26, 1906.

My Dear Father—Enclosed you will find a copy of a letter I wrote to a Christian Science friend of mine, and I thought it might, perhaps, do some good if published in the Universe. There is nothing particularly interesting in it, but it might fall under the eyes of some contemplating Christian Science—the Universe has a large circulation—or of some in whom it might start a thought toward our faith. You know that present there is a lot of confusion and agitation in regard to the so-called Christian Science in the United States, and I thought something in the way of a letter such as this to my friend, and coming from one of the laity, might be of some influence.

You know, Father, a word from a lay person is sometimes, with some people, more forcible than a word from the pulpit, whether because such people think that the priest speaks, as it were, according to his "brief," or what, I know not, but you know it is so.

In England it struck me how interested the laity of the Anglican church are on the subject of religion, not only its Gladstones and Balfours, but many very much less known than they; the Catholic laity, too, though perhaps not to such a great extent, are more or less interested in religious questions. Why is it? Are we so much more indifferent in the United States? I am sure we receive just as good instruction as our English brethren in the faith. I had hoped that the friend to whom I sent this letter would end up in the Catholic church; but she met, in an evil hour, some Christian Scientist, and I'm afraid that what I hoped will never come to pass. It is really too bad.

All I want Belgium to do is to burn more coal. In England people don't burn a startling amount of coal, but they burn even less over here. When St. Peter gives me my crown and harp I shall whisper in his ear: "Is it nice and warm in here?" Of course he may want below, if its heat you're after. The chapel here is innocent of fire most of the time, and I'm afraid my prayers are likewise sometimes. I time myself to get in just in time for the "Introito ad altare Dei," and even the "Judica me Deus," but this doesn't often happen.

I pray for the warm weather. I am at one with Keats—"Oh, for a beaker full of the warm South," though I'm afraid I shouldn't be satisfied with a "beaker full." They make quite a fuss here about mi-creme, or mid-Lent. The shops are in gain array, and sweets predominate.

ENCLOSURE

Dear Mrs. M.—I suppose you have read about the terrible inundations here. At A—the wharves and streets abutting thereon were under water. Here we did not notice it greatly, but at S—, where B—is, the dykes broke with the force of water up the river and along the river side the houses were submerged. We walked over on Sunday to see it all. There was very little loss of life, as it happened in the day time—though in about twenty minutes—the loss of property runs into the millions. Of course it is the poor one pities so in these instances. It would bring tears to any one's eyes to see their humble little homes so cruelly damaged.

I trust your father will succeed in getting his bill through Congress. Wish him luck for me. I was so glad to read what you say about coming next summer. Don't you think you would like to come over here for a few days? The route is most pleasant and comfortable by way of the N—Sea. You escape the choppy and "other" things of "La Manche"—your terror, and I can assure you, one can put away a "tidy-bit"—at E—says, "breakfast, telling it in confidence to R. I. P. Now, isn't that tempting? You would certainly enjoy A—Coming up the harbor it presents a fine sight; its wharves—I don't know how many kilometers in length—flanked by ships and boats of all sizes and kinds, some of them floating palaces, floating battle-fleets, floating war houses, and flying the flags of all nations and tribes even, I think, of the earth; and among them the dear old "Stea and Stripes," to me the most beautiful of all, of course. It is a wonderful living picture. A—certainly is all life. For contrast, you may go to B—, proud and not to be despised in the time of the Haueatic League, but to day well called "the dead B—." If you are inclined to ruminate you can so there, and do so to your heart's content.

And now for the more serious part of your letter. It touches me deeply. I know you intensely interested feeling in me and my welfare, and I appreciate it all beyond words; but I confess I don't know what you mean, quite, when you say: "Why stand back and not take advantage of the beautiful Christ-healing that is accessible to all the world again?" It always has been accessible and I have taken advantage of it. I was born into the belief, and brought up in the belief, and still hold and believe that the healing power of Christ has gone on uninterrupted from the beginning and will go on to the end. Christ Himself manifested it on earth and gave it as a legacy to His apostles and disciples: they in turn bequeathed it to their successors. You say: "Can you not believe that something better is coming to the

world all the time?" No, I must say I can't. What better can come than that which has come, and dwelt amongst us, Jesus Christ, the Way and the Truth and the Life, "Who sent the Holy Spirit?"

You ask: "Do you truly believe that the church understands fully all that Jesus taught?" The underscoring is yours, and I very frankly say I don't like it. Jesus Christ is the Head of the church; and He truly understood all He taught, and as He, the Divine Truth, taught the church and told the faithful to hear her, I shall be only witnessing to the Eternal Truth by saying to your questions: Yes, I believe truly and I believe all.

Do read the words of Christ uttered at a most solemn time, as recorded by St. Matthew, chap. xxviii, 18 v. to end of chapter and note: "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."

The whole chapter xviii of St. John is a prayer of Christ for His disciples—verse 6: "I have manifested thy name to the men thou hast given me out of the world, thine they were and to me thou gavest them and they have kept thy word." (Verse 11: "Holy Father, keep them in Thy name, whom thou hast given me." The further on the chapter goes the more intense, as it were, becomes the prayer. (Verse 20) "And not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in me." Winding up His appeal, verses 25-26: "Just Father * * * that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." Christ promised and prayed thus for the church, and for the governors and teachers of the church.

Dear Mrs. M.—do you think that prayer of Christ has ever failed, or can fail? I believe that it cannot and will not. You say, "Jesus did not establish a ritualistic church." I suppose you mean by that that Christ performed no rite, and allowed none to be performed. Now I call eating the pasch a rite, and the blessing of the bread and wine, and telling His disciples to do the same in commemoration of Him somewhat in the way of establishing a ritual. Don't you? Look over St. Luke, chapter xii, 7, 21, for an account of this, and St. John, chapter xiii, 4, 17, for the ceremony of Christ washing the feet of His disciples. He presented Himself to St. John for baptism, and heaven itself threw more than a bit of "ritual" about that. (St. Mark, chapter 1, 9, 10.) The raising of Lazarus was ceremonious to my thinking (St. John, xi, 37, 45.) as also the command to the lepers to go show themselves to the priests and offer the gifts commanded by Moses (St. Mark 1, 44). He went to the house of Jairus and took the hand of the maid and "cried out." (St. Luke viii, 54.) Magdalen's little ceremony was not only not required but praised (St. Luke vii, 38.) etc.

St. Luke vi, 40, says: "And all they that had sick brought them to Him, and He laid hands on every one of them." Thus much for ritual.

Now in regard to suffering. Christ's life is full of it and of His recommendation to us, for our more perfect purification. He resented not His own sufferings, neither did He annihilate them. (St. John xviii, 11.) Read the four histories of His sufferings and death: (St. Matthew xxvi xxvii.) Note verse 42 in the former and 46 in the latter. (St. Mark xiv xv.) Note verse 36 in the former and 34 in the latter; (St. Luke, xxii xxiii. Note verses 42, 45 and 63, 65; St. John, xviii-xix.) Note verse 22 in the former and 16-19 in the latter.

"He that taketh not up his cross and followeth Me is not worthy of Me." (St. Matthew x, 38, and also St. Mark viii, 34, to the same effect.) What do you call "undeniable doctrines?" Just get a five-cent catechism and read it through. It will not take you long, and you will see how very simple it all is—the belief of Catholics. You speak of those who come "as little children." Well, it is as "little children," that Catholics approach the Word of God, and as "little children" are all faith, and reverence added, so, too, Catholics come to it with reverence. One of the great prelates in the Catholic hierarchy in America to day relates that when at college he, as well as all the students, read the Scriptures on their knees.

It all sums itself up in a few words. Catholics accept the Word of God—and believe. You refer me to the Bible and to certain passages therein. I am glad you believe them. So do I.

Dear Mrs. M.—my faith is my free mental act, and there is no one to coerce me into it. It has grown with my growth; and is no more trouble to me than the act of respiration, and it is a gift for which, every day, and in the most reverential spirit, I cease not to give thanks to God. Christian Science can hold nothing for any Catholic. It can hold nothing for me. Always sincerely your friend, —S. M. R. C.

A PRACTICAL HINT.

"Total abstinence can effect wonders if they will make their protests practical," says the Catholic Total Abstinence Society. "Say to those arranging a banquet and wishing you to subscribe that you cannot attend if intoxicants are served. Say to those who propose a sideboard in your club that you will have to resign if it is put there. One who is not a member of our Union said, after reading the protest at the last monthly meeting, that no liquor is served in any organization of which he is a member because he would not stand for it." Much of the fault is our own, brothers. Tell your companions that they can not expect you to contribute for intoxicants, and they will have to choose between their desire for drink and their fraternal feeling for you. They probably prefer you, and if they do not the sooner you find it out the better. They will respect you all the more in any event for standing by your colors."

IS PROTESTANTISM CHRISTIANITY?

A correspondent writes: "A discussion occurred recently between another Catholic and myself over the propriety of calling Protestantism Christianity."

If your opponent affirms that Protestantism is Christianity he commits himself to the proposition that Christianity had no existence until the time of Martin Luther, in the early years of the sixteenth century. As he is a Catholic we hardly think he will hold to a statement that logically results in the denial of the existence of Christianity from the time of its founder till the sixteenth century. It is too absurd for serious consideration.

"We both admit that individual, baptized Protestants who endeavor to keep the precepts of the New Law untroubled by doubts about doctrines can be justly called Christians."

In this you are both right. "I maintained that no Protestant sect is Christianity."

You are right, and no further reason is necessary than the one we have given above. But the reason you give, namely, that no Protestant sect has a sacrifice, is a good one. It is proper to call modern and ancient heretics and schismatics by the general term Christians, though it would be improper to call them Catholics. The name "Christian" was not originated by the disciples of Christ, who called themselves "disciples of the Lord" and "Brethren," and who were called by the Jews "Nazarenes" or "Galileans," it was Antioch, after numerous conversions of the Gentiles, that the name "Christian" was given to the new believers; and it was given probably by the pagan Romans, for the purpose of distinguishing them from the Jews and pagans. "Christian" was not a term of distinction between orthodox and heterodox or Catholics and heretics, but between believers and non-believers in the New Dispensation and its Founder.

St. Augustine said: "The Christian religion is to be held by us, and the communion of that Church which is Catholic, and is called Catholic, not only by its own members, but also by all its adversaries. In spite of themselves, even the very heretics and disciples of schisms, when speaking, not with their followers but with strangers, call the Catholic Church nothing else but the Christian Church. For they cannot be understood unless they distinguish her by that name by which she is designated by the whole world."

These words of St. Augustine are as true today as they were when spoken by him in the fifth century. It was this term Catholic that distinguished the orthodox Christians from the heretics and schismatics. To be a Catholic was to be a Christian in the strict sense; to be a heretic or schismatic was to be a Christian in a less definite, more general sense—the sense in which the Latin general term applied, namely, to distinguish those who professed belief in Christ from the Jews and pagans who did not believe in Him. It was in the first, the strict sense of St. Augustine, that St. Pionius, who suffered martyrdom in the Catholic Church, for Christ has no other." It was in this same sense that the Church of Christ was designated in the Apostles creed the oldest formula of faith. "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church."

St. Ignatius, of the second century, writes: "Where the Bishop is, there let the multitude be gathered; and where the Catholic church is, there is the Christian church." Lactantius (year 325), writes: "The Catholic church is therefore the only one that retains the true worship. This is the source of truth, this is the dwelling place of faith; this is the temple of God, which whosoever enters, not, or from which whosoever departs, is an alien from the hope of eternal salvation." To be a Catholic is to be a Christian in the strict sense; to be a heretic or schismatic is to be a Christian in a less definite, more general sense—the sense in which the Latin general term applied, namely, to distinguish those who professed belief in Christ from the Jews and pagans who did not believe in Him. It was in the first, the strict sense of St. Augustine, that St. Pionius, who suffered martyrdom in the Catholic Church, for Christ has no other." It was in this same sense that the Church of Christ was designated in the Apostles creed the oldest formula of faith. "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church."

St. Alexander of Alexandria (fourth century), writing against the Arian heretics, said: "We acknowledge one and only one Catholic and Apostolic church, ever indeed incapable of being overthrown, which should choose to war against it, and which will conquer every most unhallowed opposition of the heterodox." Eusebius (fourth century), writes: "He (God) having completed the vocation of the Gentiles, established over the whole earth His City, I mean His Catholic church and the assembly of the faithful men; and of which city it is God-fearing men; and of which city it is the true City of God." St. Athanasius (fourth century), used the term Christian in its strict, Catholic sense when he wrote: "But let us nevertheless, in addition to the above, see the tradition which is from the beginning, and the doctrine and faith of the Catholic church, which the Lord indeed communicated, but the Apostles proclaimed and the Fathers guarded, for on this has the church been founded, and he who falls away from this, would not be, nor would he even be called, a Christian."

St. Epiphanius, a Greek Father of the fourth century, wrote: "and at the same time the doctrine of the gospel and the preaching of the Kingdom, which is alone the source of salvation, and the true faith of the Catholic and Apostolic church, from which all the following (heretics), which have but the name of Christ, but not the faith, have been cut off and separated. This is the summary and index of the whole treatise against the eighty heresies, and of the one defensive statement relative to the truth, to wit the one Catholic church." The Council of Arles, held in the year 314, said in its synodal letter, "Bound and adhering together to the Catholic church by a common bond of love, and by the union of that church, our Mother, we have by the

will of the most pious emperor, been gathered together in the city of Arles, whence we with well-merited reverence, salute you, most illustrious Pope (Sylvester)."

St. Jerome (fourth century), wrote: "My resolution is, to read the ancients, to try everything, to hold fast what is good, and not to recede from the faith of the Catholic church."

We might go on giving quotations to the same effect from early Christian writers. But we have given enough to show that Christianity in its strict, specific, organic and concrete sense, and the Catholic church were known as one and the same, identical. And that all not in communion with that church, and who yet were called by the general name of Christian, were heretics or schismatics.

One can be called a Christian without being a Catholic, but he cannot be a Catholic without being a Christian.—N. Y. Freeman's Journal.

CARDINAL VAUGHAN ON THE AUTHENTICITY OF RELICS.

Some may, perhaps, inquire whether the discovery that the relics are not genuine will be an awkward matter for the church? To this I answer at once: Not at all.

1. The question of the authenticity of relics is like other matters of common history—it is a question of fact to be ascertained by the canons that guide human reason in historical research, and in weighing the elements that produce moral certainty. The church pretends to no divine guidance for ascertaining such things. No Catholic is bound by his faith to accept the authenticity of such things. It is a matter of human evidence. If the evidence satisfies him he accepts their authenticity; if it does not, he either suspends his judgment or rejects it.

2. According to canon law, relics cannot be exposed for the veneration of the faithful, unless they have at some time been authenticated, or recognized by the Bishop of the diocese. But authentication of this kind does not absolutely guarantee that they are genuine. It is a matter of evidence, which is always open to experts. Relics known with certainty to be spurious may never be recognized or used as authentic.

I remember that a few years ago a dealer in reliquaries in Rome painted upon several Bishops and others, relics that he said had come from suppressed churches in Italy, and he attached to them forged certificates of authentication. As soon as this was found out a circular was issued by order of the Holy See to all Bishops commanding the possessors of all such relics to give them up or to destroy them.

3. But it will be further asked: Is not great irreverence committed by honoring false relics? To this the answer is: Yes, if you are absolutely certain that the relics are false. But if you are not certain, if you simply accept the tradition that they are actually or probably genuine, there is no irreverence.

The veneration shown to relics, pictures and crucifixes in Rome painted upon several Bishops and others, relics that he said had come from suppressed churches in Italy, and he attached to them forged certificates of authentication. As soon as this was found out a circular was issued by order of the Holy See to all Bishops commanding the possessors of all such relics to give them up or to destroy them.

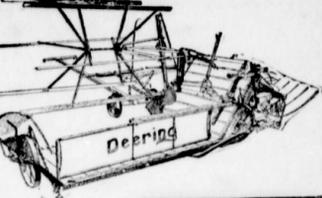
A SAD EXAMPLE.

Crazed with drink, a Detroit boy went to his home on Howard street, and demanded money from his mother that he might further enrich the saloon. When his mother refused to be a party to his excesses the boy cried led neighbors to call for the patrol wagon. Police Justice Sellers fined the youthful brute \$5 or 30 days' imprisonment. For assaulting his mother the crazed-drunk boy should have been given a long term in a state penal institution; and the saloon-keeper who helped him to choke his mother, by selling a bad boy drink, should be deprived of the means of making boys drunken, unnatural wretches. I wonder who the saloon-keeper, who sold the Howard street youth intoxicants, offer his own son drink that he might choke the being who gave him birth.—Michigan Catholic.

TWO LATE FOR A WILL.

Charles F. Wilson was a wealthy banker in Jenkintown, Pa. He died the other day. He left no will. A half hour before his death he whispered to his physician: "I want a good part of my estate to go to charity." He tried to say more, but he could not make himself understood. A few minutes later he expired. Now his money will all go to three relatives, who possibly have no need of it, and for whom he may have had no affection. The time for a man of property to make his will is while he is in good health. He should not wait for his last hour to dispose of his possessions. They are a trust, not only in their acquisition, but also in their disposition. The responsibility for the latter should be assumed while the owner is in the full possession of his faculties.—Catholic Liberator.

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LIFE AND MONEY.

Dr. Kerby, in his new well-known series on "Life and Money," writes thus forcibly in the March Catholic World:

"The spender type represents a form of life, the saver, a form of discipline of life. Incentive to saving must have been found, originally, in conditions of climate, in uncertainty of food supply in pressure of population on a limited supply. Originally, in a short-sighted people of low culture, it is simply present self-denial undertaken to obtain long pleasure or security. It is a future pleasure or security, which is a future condition in civilization, where individual and family are left to themselves; where nearly all law, social direction, and calculation are directed toward future and not to present; where the last generation provided for us and we provide for one which is to follow; where property has acquired character as an end as well as a means, and where nearly all ambitions are conditioned on it, nearly all standards are measured by it, and social classifications are dependent on it. Thus it has come to pass that we classify men as spenders and as savers, instead of rating them as sharing life wisely or unwisely. And we teach the young to save money, when we should teach them to believe that saving as saving is wise and right, when intrinsically it cannot be either. Life is everything, duty is supreme, life's ideals cannot have any other than an external and accidental relation to money. Right teaching on life and its discipline; right ordering of the individual's relation to society and of society's relation to the individual; the diminution of risk and elimination of conditions which give such powerful sanction to the habit of saving, are reforms to be introduced before we may safely attempt to change our traditional teaching. Meantime, it remains unmistakably a wise practice to save money, to prepare for the future, and subject to such desires, likes, and dislikes to such discipline as this involves. This leads us to a position wherein we may see an interesting phase of the relations of Socialism and the present order. Socialism appears as the alleged champion of life; its aim professedly is to eliminate the motive for saving as well as to end of it, to exalt life to primacy in society, and to terminate the tyranny of money. The defender of the present order is made to appear, in some way, as the champion of money against life.

"In spite of all that is ugly, hateful, dangerous, and untrue in the contentions and charges of Socialism against the actual order, there is an undeniable charm in its ideal and a degree of fascination in its aim. If one might live life as fully as Socialism promises, one might be sure of happiness and 'God here and now,' and be freed from the necessity of saving.

"Before undertaking to study the relations of spending and saving to the progress of Socialism, it may be well, after having described briefly the types of spender and of saver, to ask: Who are spenders and who are savers? These questions will draw attention back to the personal type to the social process, from which standpoint a study of Socialism may be more easily made."

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