

The Aberrant World of Karl Keating

Woe unto you also, ye lawyers –Luke 11:46

Randall Paquette

In the arena of Christian truth, it is not the one employing the greatest amount of sophistry that wins the battle. In the field of biblical teaching, it is not the one sowing the greatest deceit that produces the best harvest. In the cause of Christ, it is not the one unfurling the banner of “lies in hypocrisy” that defends the Name of the Son of God. There are those who “*wrest...scriptures unto their own destruction*”¹ and unfortunately, “*many follow their pernicious ways*”² thinking they serve God, but are in truth the “*enemies of the cross of Christ.*”³

At the website, Catholic Answers, the response to the question, “Is Catholicism Pagan?” concludes with this indefensible statement:

“Ultimately, all attempts to prove Catholicism ‘pagan’ fail. Catholic doctrines are neither borrowed from the mystery religions nor introduced from pagans after the conversion of Constantine. To make a charge of paganism stick, one must be able to show more than a similarity between something in the Church and something in the non-Christian world. One must be able to demonstrate a legitimate connection between the two, showing clearly that one is a result of the other, and that there is something wrong with the non-Christian item.

In the final analysis, nobody has been able to prove these things regarding a doctrine of the Catholic faith, or even its officially authorized practices. *The charge of paganism just doesn’t work.*”⁴

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By contrast to this, Cardinal John Newman admitted the “pagan origin” of much in the Church of Rome: He wrote,

“We are told in various ways by Eusebius that Constantine, in order to recommend the new religion to the heathen, transferred into it the outward

¹ As also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as *they do* also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. 2 Peter 3:16

² And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. 2 Peter 2:2

³ (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end *is* destruction, whose God *is* *their* belly, and *whose* glory *is* in their shame, who mind earthly things.) Philippians 3:18-19

⁴ http://www.catholic.com/library/Is_Catholicism_Pagan.asp (All **bolding** and *italics* in scripture quotations and other quotations in this paper are mine. I will not be noting this for each case.)

ornaments to which they had been accustomed in their own. It is not necessary to go into a subject which the diligence of Protestant writers has made familiar to most of us. The use of temples, and those dedicated to the particular saints, and ornamented on occasion with branches of trees, incense, lamps, and candles; votive offerings on recovery from illness, holy water, asylums, holy days and seasons, use of calendars, processions, blessings on the fields, sacerdotal vestments, the tonsure, the ring in marriage, turning to the East, **images at a later date**, perhaps the ecclesiastical chant and the Kyrie Eleison **are all of pagan origin**, and **sanctified** by adoption into the Church.”⁵

Note carefully Newman’s confession, “are all of pagan origin”! That which is admitted to makes us curious about what is not acknowledged. As “The Catholic Encyclopedia” admits;

“Little enough, however, was directly borrowed by the Church -- *nothing, without being ‘baptized’, as was the Pantheon*. In all these things, the spirit is the essential: *the Church assimilates to herself what she takes*, or, **if she cannot adapt**, she rejects it (cf. Augustine, Epp., xlvii, 3, in P. L., XXXIII, 185; ‘Contra Faust.’, XX, xxiii, *ibid.*, XLII, 387; Jerome, ‘Epp.’, cix, *ibid.*, XXII, 907). **Even pagan feasts may be ‘baptized’**: certainly our processions of 25 April are the Robigalia; the Rogation days may replace the Ambarualia; the date of Christmas Day may be due to the same instinct which placed on 25 Dec., the *Natalis invicti* of the *solar cult*. ... The cult of saints and relics is based on natural instinct and sanctioned by the lives, death, and tombs (in the first instance) of martyrs, and by the dogma of the Communion of Saints; it is not developed from *definite* instances of hero-worship as a general rule, though often a local martyr-cult was *purposely instituted to defeat (e.g.) an oracle tenacious of pagan life*.”⁶

Surely the guilt of paganism goes deeper than confessed. Nonetheless, *Catholic Answers* inserts an additional parameter in case the obvious is apparent to everyone. Not only must the connection be “clearly” demonstrated (to whose satisfaction?), but it must also be shown that “there is something wrong with the non-Christian item” (again to whose satisfaction?). The fact that the writer dismisses out of hand the irrefutable evidence in Hislop’s excellent book, *The Two Babylons*, makes it apparent that the bar is going to be raised to the transgressor’s preference. Simply put, the council for the accused demands to set the standards of what qualifies as evidence. Apparently, even God’s condemnation of pagan worship and practices is not evidence enough to please this attorney. To whom does one of Rome’s lawyer-cum-apologist turn? Karl Keating states,

“For the Catholic the answer can be almost deceptively simple: We know because the church tells us so.”⁷

“Deceptively” is right; there is nothing in the vestments, liturgy, the Mass or the hierarchy of Rome that even pretends to mimic the God-ordained structure of, and worship established in the

⁵ An essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine, Newman J.H. p.369

⁶ The Catholic Encyclopedia; Classic 1914 Edition,

⁷ What Catholics Really Believe, Karl Keating, p. 262

wilderness tabernacle of, the Old Testament era, or anything that mirrors the simplicity of the churches of the New Testament period. Thus, even though Catholic doctrine blatantly contradicts God's Word, Catholics know that their church is right because it has told them so. There is no doubt of the pagan origin of some of the "doctrine of the Catholic faith [and] even its officially authorized practices"; the candor of Cardinal Newman and others within the Catholic Church, and the research of those outside Rome prove it. There may be denial, but there is no doubt.

Many Catholics go to "Catholic Answers" seeking support for their faith, having found there an advocate in Karl Keating. As a Catholic website states,

"Karl Keating is the founder and president of Catholic Answers. He had been working as an attorney for several years when, on leaving Mass one Sunday, he found anti-Catholic tracts on the windshields of the cars in the church parking lot. He wrote his own tract in reply and distributed copies of it at the Fundamentalist church responsible for the anti-Catholic tract. That was the start of what has become the country's largest lay-run apologetics and evangelization organization."⁸

Yea, hath God said...

In Karl Keating's book, "The Usual Suspects," he seeks to utilize his skill as a so-called "lay apologist" to deflect criticism of Catholic doctrine. In the chapter entitled, "Two Notions of Worship," he focuses on the use of images. Defying the critics and Scripture, he labors at justification. Comparing apples to oranges, Keating presents his case against the critics who cite Exodus 20:4 in opposition to the use of images in worship. He writes,

"If they were more familiar with Exodus, they could skip to chapter 25 and read the account of the ornamenting of the Ark of the Covenant. The Lord commanded that the Ark, which held the tablets of the law, be topped by statues of two cherubim. The statues were to be made of gold, and the wings of the cherubim were to be held over the Ark, as though protecting it. So here we have the Lord, in chapter 20, saying, 'Don't make statues', according to Fundamentalists, and in chapter 25 the Lord says, 'Make statues.'"⁹

Keating's aberrant argument, when followed to its logical conclusion, goes like this: God commanded the Jews to make images of the cherubim; therefore, it follows that we can make images of God Himself. To Keating, Rome is justified in "*changing the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image make like to corruptible man*,"¹⁰ adorning the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, or even rendered as a drawing in St. Joseph's Baltimore Catechism.

The word "image" in the Greek means, "a likeness, representation, or resemblance." Exodus 20 forbids not only graven images, but also any likeness of anything in heaven or earth. What of the

⁸ Catholic.com

⁹ The Usual Suspects, Karl Keating; pp. 40-41

¹⁰ The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans 1:23

cherubim? They were not images of God, nor were they worshiped as God. When God commanded “*thou shalt not make ...any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath,*”¹¹ it was in connection with “*Thou shalt not have other gods before me.*”¹² Since there is only one God, all images of false gods pervert the glory of Him. Call the image Baal or Jehovah, it remains a misrepresentation of God and is forbidden. Making it into the fashion of a calf or a man, it is still a sin. Notice, too, that Keating writes that it is only “according to Fundamentalists” that the Lord says: “*Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.*” Perhaps if Keating were “more familiar with Exodus,” he would know that the Lord said it (indeed He wrote it with His finger) and that is confirmed according to Moses. Another distinction between God and the cherubim is that of Creator and creature. In Exodus 33, Moses makes this request before God, “*I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.*”¹³ God responded, “*Thou canst not see my face; for there shall no man see me and live. ...I will...cover thee with my hand while I pass by: and I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen.*”¹⁴ Also, in Deuteronomy, Moses rehearses this fact before the children of Israel: “*And the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire; ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude.*”¹⁵ And then this truth of “God unseen”¹⁶ is used to reinforce the commandment against making images, “*Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire: Lest ye corrupt yourselves and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female.*”¹⁷ However, the cherubim and seraphim men had seen (Ezekiel 10:3-8; Isaiah 6:2-3); and no doubt Moses had seen them also. Certainly God had shown him the pattern of them (Exodus 25: 9 & 40; see also Numbers 8:4 and Hebrews 8:5).

Keating continues to make mistakes when explaining the incident in Exodus 32:1-6 where the Jews fell back to image worship. He states,

“There was nothing at all wrong with fashioning a statue from jewelry. What was wrong was that the Israelites then worshiped the nonexistent god the calf represented. They committed the sin of idolatry. There never has been a sin of statue-making.”¹⁸

The loophole Keating believes he has chanced upon exists only in his mind. Again, Keating ought to read “out of” Exodus (exegetically) instead of trying to read into it (eisegetically): “*Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.*”¹⁹ If someone makes an image for the purpose of worship, is he guiltless? Certainly not! A lawyer should understand this point. The one who furnishes the weapon *for the purpose* of murder is guilty in that murder. So, to make an

¹¹ Exodus 20:4

¹² Exodus 20:3

¹³ Exodus 33:18

¹⁴ Exodus 33:18-23

¹⁵ Deuteronomy 4:12

¹⁶ Rome recognizes this fact: “In distinction to the nations around, Israel was to worship an unseen God”; Catholic Encyclopedia, 1914 ed

¹⁷ Deuteronomy 4:15&16

¹⁸ The Usual Suspect, Karl Keating; p.40

¹⁹ Exodus 20:4

image to utilize in worship makes you guilty in the eyes of God. The Catholic Encyclopedia concurs:

“The people are *not only* told not to adore images nor serve them; **they are not even to make any graven thing or the likeness, it would seem, of anything at all.** One could understand so far-reaching a command at that time [‘at any time’!, it ought to read, man is not above this sin today - ed.]. If they made statues **or pictures**, they probably would end by adoring them.”²⁰

“There has never been a sin of statue-making.” Really? “*Sin is transgression of the law.*”²¹ If in the law of God you are told “not to make” and you make, that is sin. And to speculate “they probably would end by adoring them” is irrelevant; the primary duty of man is to obey God. Genesis shows man disobeying God, and then attempting to excuse and even justify his actions: to himself – “*the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes and a tree to be desired to make one wise*”²²; and to God – “*the woman thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.*”²³ King Saul tried to excuse his disobedience under the **cloak of worshipping the Lord.**²⁴ He was commanded to destroy all things belonging to the Amalekites even their animals, but he spared “*the best of the sheep and of the oxen to sacrifice unto the LORD.*”²⁵ God rejected this act of “**baptized**” or sanctified “disobedience”: “*to obey is better than sacrifice... for rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.*”²⁶

Now let’s look closely at Exodus 32. The Jews were not to make an image, which they did – “*Up make us Elohim*”;²⁷ and they were not to worship images, which they did – “*And they rose up early on the morrow...and brought peace offerings.*”²⁸ Kneeling before, supplicating before, bringing an offering to, are all considered acts of worship to an image. Keating is wrong about this also; the calf did not represent a “nonexistent god,” it represented Jehovah: “*These be thy Elohim, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.*”²⁹ Jehovah was the Elohim who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt. Therefore in verse 5, Aaron built an altar before the idol and made a proclamation: “*Tomorrow is a feast to the LORD.*”³⁰ The Hebrew word translated “LORD” is the Tetragrammaton: YHWH, or as transliterated with certain vowels added for pronunciation, Jehovah. Elohim is plural, and hence often rendered by the translators “gods,” or “God” when referring to Jehovah. This single molten (*mas-say-kaw*) calf (*ay'-ghel*) represented Jehovah (Elohim); and, with an altar in front of it, the disobedient Israelites celebrated a feast to the molten calf (Jehovah). Psalm 106:19-24 focuses on this episode and confirms this corrupted worship of Jehovah with these words:

²⁰ The Catholic Encyclopedia, 1914 edition.

²¹ 1 John 3:4

²² Genesis 3:6

²³ Genesis 3:12

²⁴ 1 Samuel 15:3, 14-23

²⁵ *Ibid.* 15:15

²⁶ *Ibid.* 15:22-23

²⁷ Exodus 32:1

²⁸ Exodus 32:6

²⁹ Exodus 32:4

³⁰ Exodus 32:5

*“They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image. Thus they **changed their glory into the similitude** of an ox that eateth grass. They forgot God their savior which had done great things in Egypt.”*

Who was “*their glory*”? God was ***their glory***;³¹ “...but the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, **and thy God thy glory.**”³² We are also forbidden from making images of Jesus Christ. “For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of **the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.**”³³ No image or picture could portray the glory of God in the medium in which it is transmitted. All it can ever do is to give it a human face, the face of corruptible man. “**And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God [in the face of Jesus Christ] into an image made like to corruptible man.**”³⁴

As J. Virgil Dunbar wrote, “Previously, during the first three centuries, the only known pictures to represent Christ had come from such sources as 1) the pagan who mocked an unknown Christian’s Lord by drawing a man on a cross: a man with a donkey’s head; 2) Gnostics, the people who tried to reconcile and integrate popular concepts of deity into the Christian faith; and 3) some untrained Christians living in the catacombs. After Constantine’s edict, however, the church relaxed its guard against idolatry.”³⁵

Jesus Christ is God: “of the substance of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God...” (Nicene Creed). The anathemas of Second Council of Constantinople included: “If anyone does not confess that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are one nature or essence, one power or authority, *worshipped as a trinity of the same essence, one deity in three hypostases or persons*, let him be anathema.” The worship of Christ cannot be separated from the worship of His Deity; Christ is God. To make an image of Jesus is to make an image of God, “*for in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.*”³⁶

Little children keep yourselves from idols...

All Images and paintings being of pagan origin according to Cardinal Newman, entered the Roman Catholic Church at a later date, and their evil insinuation was not without incident and resistance within the fold. As the Catholic Encyclopedia states,

“But canon xxxvi of the Synod of Elvira is important. This was a general synod of the Church of Spain held, apparently *about the year 300*, in a city near Granada. It made many severe laws against *Christians who relapsed into idolatry*, heresy, or sins against the Sixth Commandment. The canon reads: ‘**It is ordained (Placuit) that Pictures are not to be in churches, so that that which is worshipped and adored shall not be painted on walls.**’ The meaning of the canon has been much

³¹ Psalm 3:3; 62:7; 89:7; 1 Samuel 4:21, 22

³² Isaiah 60:19

³³ 2 Corinthians 4:6

³⁴ Romans 1:23

³⁵ Christ Can’t Be Pictured, J. Virgil Dunbar; p.198

³⁶ Colossians 2:9

discussed. Some have thought it was only a precaution against possible profanation by pagans who might go into a church. Others see in it a law against pictures on principle. In any case the canon can have produced but a slight effect even in Spain, where there were holy pictures in the fourth century as in other countries. But it is interesting to see that just at the end of the first period there were some bishops who disapproved of the growing cult of images. Eusebius of Caesarea (d. 340), the Father of Church History, must be counted among the enemies of icons. In several Places in his history he shows his dislike of them. **They are a ‘heathen custom’** (*ethnike synetheia* Hist. eccl., VII, 18); **he wrote many arguments to persuade Constantine's sister Constantia not to keep a statue of our Lord** (see Mansi XIII, 169). A contemporary bishop, Asterius of Amasia, *also tried to oppose the spreading tendency*. In a sermon on the parable of the rich man and Lazarus he says: **‘Do not Paint pictures of Christ he humbled himself enough by becoming man.’** (Combefis, ‘Auctar. nov.’, I, ‘Hom. iv in Div. et Laz.’). Epiphanius of Salamis (d. 403) tore down a curtain in a church in Palestine because it had a picture of Christ or a saint. The Arian Philostorgius (fifth century) too was a forerunner of the Iconoclasts (Hist. Eccl., II, 12; VII, 3), as also the Bishop of Marseilles (Serenus), to whom St. Gregory the Great wrote his defence of pictures (see above). Lastly we may mention that in at least one province of the Church (Central Syria) Christian art developed to great perfection while it systematically rejected all representation of the human figure. **These exceptions are few compared with the steadily increasing influence of images and their worship** all over Christendom, but they serve to show that *the holy icons did not win their place entirely without opposition*, and they represent a thin stream of opposition as the antecedent of the virulent Iconoclasm of the eighth century.”³⁷

The acceptance of images in Romanism steadily increased with the passing of time, but because a “wrong” becomes more popular and even accepted, that does not change it into a “right.” Notice the phrase in the previous quote: **“images and their worship”!** The Catholic Encyclopedia recognizes this fact even if Keating and other Catholic writers do not. An article entitled, “Do Catholics Worship Statues?” dismisses the very suggestion: “‘Catholics worship statues!’ People still make this ridiculous claim.”³⁸ “Ridiculous”? Not according to the Catholic Encyclopedia as quoted above. There were iconoclasts (image breakers), even before the Reformation, who tried to stop this fruit of apostasy. Contrasting the “extremes” of the iconoclasts against the more “sober view” of Rome, the Catholic Encyclopedia boasts:

³⁷The Catholic Encyclopedia, 1914 ed.

³⁸ Catholic.com, no author given, however it has this seal to it.

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“On the other hand, in Rome especially, we find the position of holy images **explained soberly** and reasonably.... But in **the East, too, there were people who shared this more sober Western view**. Anastasius, Bishop of Theopolis (d. 609), who was a friend of St. Gregory and translated his ‘Regula pastoralis’ into Greek, expresses himself in almost the same way and makes the distinction between *proskynesis* and *latreia* that became so famous in Iconoclast times: ‘*We worship (proskynoumen) men and the holy angels; we do not adore (latreuomen) them. Moses says: Thou shalt worship thy God and Him only shalt thou adore. Behold, before the word 'adore' he puts 'only', but not before the word 'worship', because it is lawful to worship [creatures], since worship is only giving special honour (times emphasis), but it is not lawful to adore them nor by any means to give them prayers of adoration (proseuxasthai)*” (Schwarzlose, op. cit., 24).³⁹

To “worship...the holy angels” is the more *sober* Western view?

Keating makes the following statement in his effort to justify acts of disobedience but fails to prove any point or defend any position.

“This brings us to statues in Catholic churches. Fundamentalists see us kneel before statues of Mary and the saints and conclude we are worshipping either the statues as such or at least the saints represented by the statues. The fact that a Catholic kneels before a statue to pray does not mean he is praying to the statue. A Fundamentalist may kneel with a Bible in his hand, but no one thinks he is praying to a book.”⁴⁰

Are we to understand that kneeling to pray before an image, which is *a teacher of lies*⁴¹ is the same as holding in your hands while you pray a Bible, which is the Word of truth? No, and Keating is correct: “no one thinks he is praying to a book” because he is not. Further, Keating seems to imply that both of these acts are equally innocent and, therefore, both are equally good. Christians are enjoined to reverence and obey God’s written Word; the same cannot be said of images. No point is scored by that aberrant comparison. In the book of Acts,⁴² we read of the craftsmen who made their living by fashioning idols of the goddess Diana. Two things are worthy of note; there were hundreds of statues of Diana throughout the city, but her devotees prayed to, venerated, and worshipped the one goddess whom these images represented. The statues were honored because of whom they represented. Those men who fashioned the idols for others were just as guilty before the law of God as those who bowed down before them to pray and worship the gods they represented.

How does God regard kneeling before a statue to pray? “*Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts, and put the stumbling block of iniquity before their face: should I be enquired of at all by them?*”⁴³ The true difference between the “Fundamentalist” and the

³⁹ The Catholic Encyclopedia, 1914 edition

⁴⁰ The Usual Suspects, Karl Keating; p.41

⁴¹ Habakkuk 2:18

⁴² Acts 19:23-28

⁴³ Ezekiel 14:3

Catholic in Keating's homey little example is that the former is obeying the teachings of that Book, while the latter is not. Is an image of Christ before which a Catholic kneels and prays, in truth worships, a justifiable icon? According to an article by Tim Staples at Catholic Answers it is.

“Jesus gives us the ultimate example of the value of statues and icons. Indeed, Christ, in his humanity, has opened up an entirely new economy of iconography and statuary. Christ becomes for us the ultimate reason for all representations of the angels and saints [The Son of God humbling himself to become a man is justifiable reason for sinners to exalt themselves above God's law and make images? – ed.]

Why? Colossians 1:15 tells us that Christ is "the image [Greek: *icon*] of the invisible God." Christ is the ultimate icon! And what does this icon reveal to us? He reveals God the Father. When Jesus said, "He who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9), he does not mean that he *is* the Father. He isn't. He's the Son. Christ "reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature"(Heb.1:3).

Essentially, that is what statues and icons are. Just as "the Word became flesh" (John 1:14) and revealed the Father to us in a manner beyond the imaginings of men before the advent of Christ, representations of God's holy angels and saints are also icons of Christ who, by their heroic virtue, "reflect the glory of God." Just as Paul told the Corinthians to hold up his own life as a paradigm when he said, "I urge you, then, be imitators of me" (1 Cor. 4:16), the Church continues to hold up great men and women of faith as "icons" of the life of Christ lived in fallen human nature aided by grace.”⁴⁴

Staples presumes to read God's mind and speak on His behalf. The Incarnation of Christ no more authorizes the use of images than the coming of the Holy Spirit justifies necromancy.⁴⁵ Both images and necromancy were forbidden in the Old Testament and neither has been now legitimized by the events of the New Testament. Certainly one of the ultimate iconic transgressions in Rome's pantheon of images is her statues and pictures of Jesus Christ. Christ in the incarnation is a work only God could do; an image or picture is a sin only man can do. The incarnation is not justification, nor authorization, for breaking the Laws of God. Christ came not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfill.⁴⁶ Faith does not make void the Law of God; it establishes it.⁴⁷ And sin, as ever, is transgression of the Law. That which God clearly commands in His written Word has not been overruled by the revelation of the Incarnate Word. Staples wrote, “When Jesus said, ‘He who has seen me has seen the Father’ (John 14:9), he does not mean that he *is* the Father. He isn't. He's the Son.” In Isaiah 9:6, the prophecy of the coming Messiah tells us, “*Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given... and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, **The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.***” The three Persons in one God cannot be worshiped as three separate gods. Staples would rip the Godhead asunder and pervert the Word of God to justify a “baptized,” pagan form of worship.

⁴⁴ Statues of Limitation, Tim Staples; article at Catholic.com

⁴⁵ Occult practice of attempting to communicate with the spirits of the dead.

⁴⁶ Matthew 5:17

⁴⁷ Romans 3:31

He would have Christ, who came to do the Father's will, sanction His follower's disobedience of that will. In truth, Staples would have his own speculative and subjective interpretation of God's will supersede the revealed will of God in the Scripture. Jesus said, "*Not everyone that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth my Father's will which is in heaven.*"⁴⁸ It is "*not the hearers of the law that are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.*"⁴⁹ Christ is revealed not in a statue but in the Bible. A papal encyclical of Leo XIII says,

"About the Savior of the human race, nothing is more fruitful and more significant than what is found throughout the entire Bible; and Jerome was right when he affirmed that; 'ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ.' **There one sees as it were His image**, vivid and animated, and this spectacle in an admirable manner relieves misfortune, exhorts to virtue, and invites to divine love."⁵⁰

Even a stopped clock has those moments when it is right. The face and image of Christ is revealed in the Scriptures; in other words, the Word of God (the Bible) reveals the Word of God (the Son). In Christ "*dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.*"⁵¹ An image of Christ is not a representation of how He looks now, nor is it a faithful reproduction of what He looked like when on earth. All religious artists build upon the folly of those who have preceded them providing a pantheon of false christs. A religious image is what it has always been—the superstitious ramblings of the imagination of a carnal mind—moved and justified by the reasoning of a heart of stone.

There are those amongst evangelicals who justify the use of pictures of Jesus Christ. Cite the Second Commandment to them and they accuse you of keeping the letter of the Law, but not its spirit. It is as though the spirit of the Law were something separate and distinct from the letter of the Law. I agree that there were those like the Pharisees who kept the letter of the Law, but not its spirit. I contend, however, that *you cannot break the letter of the Law* and yet uphold the spirit of the Law. The spirit of the Law resides within the letter of the Law as our own spirit resides within our body. Moreover, the spirit does not rescind the law, it expands it; "*Thou shalt not commit adultery, but I say unto you that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*"⁵²

There is a way that seemeth right unto a man

Keating defends the use of relics in the Catholic Church:

"[Critics say]...Even if relics can be shown to be genuine, we shouldn't venerate them because Scripture is silent about relics. Is that so? Let's look at what Scripture says. The bones of Elisha brought a dead man to life: ...Once some people were burying a man, when suddenly they spied...a raiding band. So they

⁴⁸ Matthew 7:21

⁴⁹ Romans 2:13

⁵⁰ From the Douay Bible; Encyclical Letter on the Study of Holy Scripture

⁵¹ Colossians 2:9

⁵² Matthew 5:27-28

cast the dead man into the grave of Elisha, and everyone went off. But when the man came in contact with the bones of Elisha, he came back to life and rose to his feet (2 Kings 13:20-21). A woman was cured of a hemorrhage by touching the hem of Christ's cloak (Mt 9:20-22). The sick were healed when Peter's shadow passed over them (Acts 5:15-16). So extraordinary were the mighty deeds which God accomplished at the hands of Paul that when face cloths or aprons that touched his skin were applied to the sick, their diseases left them and the evil spirits came out of them (Acts 19:11-12). If these aren't examples of the use of relics, what are?"⁵³

Are they examples of the use of relics? The dictionary defines relics as: "remaining parts or fragments; the remains of a deceased person; something kept in remembrance; souvenir; memento." Is the shadow of Peter while he was alive a relic? Can you retain a shadow as a memento or a relic? The Catholic Encyclopedia explains relics as:

The word *relics* comes from the Latin *reliquiae* (the counterpart of the Greek *leipsana*) which already before the propagation of Christianity was used in its modern sense, viz., *of some object, notably part of the body or clothes, remaining as a memorial of a departed saint*. The veneration of relics, in fact, *is to some extent a primitive instinct*, and *it is associated with many other religious systems besides that of Christianity*.⁵⁴ [You can assume them to be pagan systems. – ed]

Touching the hem of Christ's garment was no more the use of a relic than the salve Christ applied to the eyes of a blind man, which he made from clay mixed with his spittle.⁵⁵ Paul was alive when these miracles were performed and, therefore, neither can this be cited as the use of relics. With what are we left? the grave of Elisha. Is this single miracle, in Keating's thinking, the evidence that God ordained the cult of relic worship? Elisha's bones were in his grave; they had not been collected as relics prior, or subsequent, to this miracle. Keating has no scriptural authority for religious relics. It is motivated by a **primitive instinct**: the baser inclinations of man's pagan nature. Since these supposed "proofs" from Scripture furnish no proof, Keating's conclusion is turned on its head:

Anyone who rejects all Catholic relics today as frauds should reject these biblical accounts as frauds.⁵⁶

To write that these "biblical accounts" are "examples of the use of relics" is fraudulent and a lie and, therefore, are to be rejected. Consequently, "all Catholic relics today [are] frauds," just as they have been throughout history. The children of Israel carried Joseph's bones back into the Promised Land for burial, not to hold onto and venerate. The disciples of John the Baptist buried his remains; they did not hold onto any parts as relics. God hid the body of Moses from the Jews, no doubt for this very reason: to keep them from the fetish of relics. Still, Rome seeks to justify this primitive, superstitious behavior.

⁵³ What Catholics Really Believe, Karl Keating; p.137-138

⁵⁴ The Catholic Encyclopedia, 1914 edition,

⁵⁵ John 9:6

⁵⁶ What Catholics Really Believe, Karl Keating; p. 138

“Few points of faith can be more satisfactorily traced back to the earliest ages of Christianity than the veneration of relics. The classical instance is to be found in the letter written by the inhabitants of Smyrna, about 156, describing the death of St. Polycarp. After he had been burnt at the stake, we are told that his faithful disciples wished to carry off his remains, but the Jews urged the Roman officer to refuse his consent for fear that the Christians "would only abandon the Crucified One and begin to worship this man". Eventually, however, as the Smyrnaeans say, "we took up his bones, which are more valuable than precious stones and finer than refined gold, and laid them in a suitable place, where the Lord will permit us to gather ourselves together, as we are able, in gladness and joy, and to celebrate the birthday of his martyrdom." This is the keynote which is echoed in a multitude of similar passages found a little later in the patristic writers of both East and West. Harnack's *tone in referring to this development is that of an unwilling witness overwhelmed by evidence which it is useless to resist*. "Most offensive," he writes, "was the worship of relics. It flourished to its greatest extent as early as the fourth century and no Church doctor of repute restricted it. All of them rather, even the Cappadocians, countenanced it. The numerous miracles which were wrought by bones and relics seemed to confirm their worship. The Church therefore, would not give up the practice, although a violent attack was made upon it by a few cultured heathens and besides by the Manichaeans" (Harnack, "Hist. of Dog.," tr., IV, 313). From the Catholic standpoint there was no extravagance or abuse in this cult as it was recommended and indeed taken for granted, by writers like St. Augustine, St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Chrysostom, St. Gregory Nazianzen, and by all the other great doctors without exception."⁵⁷

Keating attempts to buffer the damning evidence of history by admitting that there “might have been a mistake, or fakes might have been substituted for the real relics,”⁵⁸ but the weight of that evidence puts the lie to his defense.

“Moreover, since relics were a source of indulgences when properly venerated, the relic-mania of the late Middle Ages was also intricately connected with indulgences. ... This phenomenon was accompanied by the amassment of relics by certain churches or individuals. In Halle, for instance, Cardinal Albrecht of Brandenburg had acquired an amazingly precise 39,245,120 years of indulgence through his collection.”⁵⁹

Fakes? Still Rome rationed out indulgences to those ignorant gullible pilgrims who venerated relics, such as the ones in this small portion in the list from the Castle Church at Wittenberg:

⁵⁷ The Catholic Encyclopedia, 1914 edition

⁵⁸ What Catholics Really Believe, Karl Keating; p. 137

⁵⁹ War Against the Idols, Carlos M. N. Eire; p. 15 – (an indulgence is a remission of the temporal punishment due to sin, the guilt of which has been forgiven – The Catholic Encyclopedia; according to Catholic doctrine, the guilt of the sin is forgiven, but you still have to suffer in purgatory for it – ed.).

“...Three pieces of the city where the Virgin Mary was born. One piece of a yarn which she spun. ...Five particles of the milk of the Virgin Mary. One piece of the tree where Mary nursed the Lord near the Garden of Balsam. ...One piece of the wax candle given to Our Lady when she died. ...Four pieces of the city where the Lord Jesus was born. One piece of the diaper in which he was wrapped ...One piece of the burning bush which Moses saw. ...One piece of the beard of the Lord Jesus. ...All in all: five thousand and five pieces. An indulgence of one hundred days for each piece.”⁶⁰

The fact is that the whole unscriptural doctrine of relics is a primitive superstition that gives itself to such nonsensical excesses. If there is abuse, it is not of relics, for the relics themselves are the abuse; they are an abuse of religion, they are an abuse of nature, they are an abuse of enlightened reason. When Keating twists Scripture in an attempt to justify them, they are an abuse of God’s Word. Where there is no truth in the foundation, the aberrant structure that rises ought not to startle us.

“On Thursday, 21 January 1535, Paris witnessed one of the most grandiose public displays ever staged in the city up to that time, and perhaps one of the most dramatic and revealing responses ever launched against Protestantism anywhere in Europe. Out into the streets of Paris poured forth an amazing multitude, the likes of which none could remember. The royal court, **the church hierarchy**, the university administration, the municipal government, the religious houses, the trade guilds, and each every parish in the city came out to witness to the Catholic faith. Appropriately enough, the most important relics were also brought out from the churches and chapels. ...Among the relics that **were brought out to help expiate the city and the nation from the sin of the heretics**, Parisians especially delighted in seeing the head of the Apostle Philip, the bodies of St. Genevieve and St. Victor, a fragment of the true cross, droplets from the blood of Jesus and the milk of Mary, and the treasured crown of thorns from the Sainte Chapelle, which made people’s hair “stand on end.””⁶¹

Oh my people, they, which lead thee, cause thee to err

The harshness of my criticism, if there be any, is not intended against the taught, but is directed against the teachers who add lies to falsehood. Beneath layers of deception, dishonesty, and mendacity, they bury the truth of the gospel of grace and of our glorious Redeemer, Jesus Christ. It is to the Catholic people that my heart reaches. In ignorance they trust their priests, apologists, and Church Doctors to care for their souls and to teach them the truth of God’s Word. However, because these false teachers and blind guides do not do the latter, neither can they do the former. It is not by the twisting and misapplication of Scripture that sound doctrine is formed.

Let an honest Catholic read the Bible free from the shackles of Rome’s restrictions. He will discover, what he thought to be the source of Rome’s authority, is in truth the evidence of its guilt. He will also discover that there is forgiveness of sins with God through the finished work

⁶⁰ The Reformation, Hans J. Hillerbrand; pp. 48-49

⁶¹ War Against the Idols, Carlos M.N. Eire; pp. 191-192,

of Jesus Christ. He will also find that Christ is able to save to the uttermost all that come to Him. There is no need of praying to a labyrinth of dead saints or venerating musty bits of bone and old cloth. You can have access directly to a loving, merciful Father as these portion of Scripture reveal: "...*Our Father which art in heaven...If Christ be for us, who can be against us...accepted in the Beloved...I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee unto myself.*" The pantheon of dead saints and collections of relics are both unnecessary and unscriptural. Christ died for sinners, which are the rebels and enemies of God. Has He suddenly become unmerciful and unreachable? Rome would have you believe so. *And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us.*⁶²

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⁶² 1 John 5:14