

University of Notre Dame  
Religious Bulletin  
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Communications

Query: A student friend of mine says that on Friday after Thanksgiving, and on a Friday following a big feast day, like Christmas, Catholics may eat meat.

Reply: The Church has never made that exception in her laws of abstinence. There are certain dispensations granted from the obligation of Friday abstinence, such as the faculty extended to Bishops when a Holy Day falls on Friday, or a holiday falls on Friday (like Memorial Day, etc.). During the war, bishops were free to dispense according to the needs of the people of their dioceses. But there have been no general concessions made for Fridays following big feast days. Furthermore, the argument that the left-over meat might spoil is specious. This might be true in a very hot climate; but hardly in our country, and in our age of refrigeration.

Query: I have a friend, a Christian Scientist, who insists on telling me how effective his religious beliefs are in practical life. How do you refute him ?

Reply: Christian Scientists, or adherents to the Church of Christ Scientist, are taught to believe a contradiction which, strangely enough, none of them seem to detect. A basic tenet of their teaching is that ill-health is not real. An equally important teaching is that ill-health can be cured, not by application of medical means, but by faith.

The sect was founded in Boston in 1879 by Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy. She was by no means original in her thinking, but she borrowed from a certain P. P. Quimby, the founder of the "New Thought" movement. Quimby aimed at freeing man from sickness of the body by exercising the patient's will and assurance. He claimed that Christ healed in this manner, misinterpreting the meaning of a miracle. His reasoning went this way: "If God is real and God is good, then evil, the opposite of God, is unreal. Sickness and ill-health are evil; therefore they cannot be real, but simply the error of the mortal mind." The system is based on a pure idealism which, in the extreme, insists that there is no substance in matter.

After Quimby's death, Mrs. Eddy plagiarized his teaching and his writings, and wrote a book under her own name in which she claimed divine illumination. This official textbook of the sect is a disorderly composition on the healing of disease with a key to the Sacred Scriptures. The beliefs of the Church of Christ Scientist are not practical because they are not based on scientific fact, nor on the true teaching of Jesus Christ.

Query: Is it a sin to read the horoscopes printed in the daily papers ?

Reply: It is if one believes them. The sin is one of superstition, a violation of the First Commandment. The so-called science of astrology, of which the horoscope is an instrument, is a pseudo-science which professes to judge the alleged influence of the stars on human affairs. Before the development of astronomical science, astrology had a popular and a respectable place in education. It was through simplicity and ignorance of real fact that the movements of the stars were thought to be efficient causes of earthly change. Any belief of that sort is unfounded in science, and can be nothing more than superstition. And superstition, you know, is a sin against the First Commandment.

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PRAYERS: - Deceased: father of Robert Hilger of Sorin; sister of Sister Ludgeria, CSC; father of Tom O'Brien, '40. Ill: Ray Brady, '24; Mr. W.R.G. Baker (Advisory Board for Science); wife of Joe Gartland, '27; mother of Frank Jelinek of Sorin; sister of Jack Lukanitch, '34; father of Mike McGovern of Stanford; father of J. Corrigan of Stanf'd.