

In the fall of 1886, when his old friend, Dr. McGlynn, was suspended by the Archbishop of New York, for exercising his right as a citizen to advocate certain economic principles, in which course Dr. McGlynn has been vindicated by time and a superior authority, Father Malone, foreseeing the great injury that would come to his beloved Church, and being in full sympathy with the justice of Dr. McGlynn's position, wrote the following letter to the Holy Father, Leo XIII., which was forwarded to the Pope through Monsignor Bernard O'Reilly:

#### FATHER MALONE'S LETTER TO THE POPE.

"Brooklyn, N. Y., December 29, 1886.

"Most Holy Father :

"It may seem anomalous to your Holiness that an humble priest in the United States of America, of forty-three years' standing, should address the head of the Christian Church.

"If the case which I desire to bring to your attention were a personal one and had simply a local significance, I would not presume to write directly to your Holiness ; but knowing its far-reaching influence on the present and future of the Church in America, I deem it in no way out of place to address the great Pope Leo XIII. to whom all have access as the infallible guide and teacher in Christ's visible Church on earth.

"Ere this letter reaches your august presence, the case of Dr. McGlynn and his ecclesiastical superiors will have claimed your serious consideration, as the eminent Cardinal of the Propaganda will have made it a matter of grave interest.

"That a trouble of this kind should have arisen at the beginning of the rule of the young and pious Archbishop of New York, Dr. Corrigan, is a great misfortune to religion in this country.

"Dr. McGlynn, the best-known priest in America, the friend of the poor, the eloquent defender of the doctrines of the Church, the advocate of temperance and of every cause that works for the public good, is one whom to censure, unless for a very grave irregularity, will put back the Church half a century throughout the United States, for the doctor is a universal favorite. The Archbishop himself has said to me that he is a pious priest, but that he has been too earnest in the advocacy of Henry George's theory of taxing land alone and not the fruits of labor.

"The exercise of ecclesiastical authority, at all times a subject of the gravest importance to the Church, is never more so than when it involves the liberty of the citizen, and nothing could blight the future hopes of the Church in this country more than any act of ecclesiastical authority that might raise the question of the right of the citizen.

"To interfere with the civil rights of citizens, or deny them freedom to give their views to their fellow-citizens on all public and open questions, would at once challenge the whole people to the contest, and bring about a state of public sentiment antagonistic to the best interests of the Church. The charges against Dr. McGlynn, as they are understood by the American people, raise the question of the right of the citizen to express his views freely and openly on all questions that are non-essential.

"Nothing can alter this view of the case, and I ask, is it wise to give our fellow-citizens cause, even for suspicion, that Catholics are the enemies of this principle of civil liberty, held so sacred by all Americans ?

"The wisdom of the Holy Father will see at a glance the importance of this fact, for fact it is, as all the press, both Democratic and Republican, dwell on this point, that civil liberty is trodden down in the person of Dr. McGlynn, should Rome sanction his removal from the pastoral charge of St. Stephen's twenty thousand souls.

"I have this faith in Americans, to believe that, should there be any delinquency found in the life of the Rev. Dr. McGlynn, they would be the first to uphold ecclesiastical authority in any penalty which might reasonably be imposed for his correction and improvement.

"His case must be considered apart from his action in the George movement, unless the Holy Church condemns the principle upon which that movement is based, and teaches that the state must hold that it is not true in morals that she can take into her own hands the dominion of the land for the benefit of all, the poor as well as the rich. As the case is understood now in America, the nation is against Archbishop Corrigan's condemnation of Dr. McGlynn.

"As for the Catholic people themselves, they believe that Dr. McGlynn deserves well of the Church because of the reticence and reserve he has practised, and the forbearance he has shown under the most trying circumstances. The poor of New York, however, the hard-working people, would not be so patient and reticent were an appeal made to them for an expression of what they think of the eminent worth of Dr. McGlynn as a great and good priest of twenty-six years of laborious service in one of the largest and most populous parishes in the United States.

"I know the Holy Father will never allow this good and faithful people to be put to so severe a test. It were well for religion that this controversy were never begun, and now the best solution of the matter is to leave Dr. McGlynn the honored pastor and friend of the poor. He is not one that will cherish resentment. For the sake of his Church and his God he is capable of being forgiving and forbearing.

"I beg you, Holy Father, to consider the points I have desired to submit to you, and, unless I have failed to present them in all their inherent force, I doubt not your supreme judgment will prevent a great scandal in the city of New York. I have written without consultation with any one, solely of my own option, and purely from a conscientious sense of duty. My prayer will be constant at the holy mass to Jesus Christ and to His Blessed Mother to aid in bringing about a reconciliation between Archbishop Corrigan and Dr. McGlynn, two of the dearest and most esteemed friends I have in the priesthood in America.

"Begging your blessing on the remnant of a long and, I hope, not unprofitable life, much of which was spent in the hard working days of the Church's early life, I am, in the most profound and humble manner that language can express, your loving son in Christ,

"Sylvester Malone,

"Pastor of Sts. Peter and Paul's Church,  
"Brooklyn, N. Y."

This letter was first made public to correct many misleading reports of Father Malone's position on this subject, and also in reply to criticism of his attendance at the monster meeting in the Academy of Music, New York, March 29, 1887, to listen to Dr. McGlynn's address on "The Cross of the New Crusade," an address which, the New York Sun said, was "entitled to rank with those great orations which, at critical times and from the mouths of men of genius, have swayed the course of public opinion and changed the onward movement of nations."

The letter was published in the New York Herald of May 4, 1887, as part of an interview with "Father Malone, one of those grand old priests who have been pioneers of religion in the New World." Father Malone began his interview by saying:

"So many statements have appeared lately, calculated to confuse the public mind in relation to my position on the great question of the right of conscience and civil liberty, that I am constrained, in order to meet all these diverse and confusing statements, to make public once for all the position I took on this great question four months ago—a position that I have never swerved from since, and that I hold to-day to be the only rational, wise, and conservative view of the whole case. I leave out of it all bias, prejudice, or personal feeling, and judge the case as impartial history will undoubtedly judge it, when we and all the principal actors on this transitory stage will have passed away."

A year later the letter was published in many of the New York and Brooklyn papers, to reaffirm his views, which all through the years of controversy he maintained unaltered. No man was more pleased than he when, on Christmas Eve, 1892, Dr. McGlynn called upon him with the news of his vindication by the

Delegate of Pope Leo XIII., Archbishop Satolli.

Filled with deeds of benefaction as had been all the years of his ministry, the closing years of Father Malone's half-century of priestly labor found him as earnest and zealous in his work of helping his fellow-man as at any earlier period of his life. ...

p; 156-158:

All would be vain were my life not devoted to the interest of my fellow-man. No matter how the priest may regard all other considerations, here is one he cannot ignore without losing his lawful standing before God and men. It is to treat with all men on just and fair terms; to know them only as they are, men endowed by their Creator with attributes of wonderful power and greatness, that lifts us all to the very throne of God. Truly, in God we live, move, and have our being. And when men realize this truth and see its application, they must logically be drawn to him whom they see, man, and to Him whom they do not see, save in His creatures, and warmed into love and praise of His sacred majesty.

I know, and have ever acted on my knowledge, that we must love one another as we love ourselves, and that this obligation is not left to our own narrow views. We are taught that all mankind is our neighbor in the sense given the doctrine by Him who first proclaimed it to a very sinful world. Love is the perfection of the law. He wished us to have an infallible rule of guidance, and He has assured us, if we love our neighbor for His sake, we can reasonably conclude that we love Him, and are therefore in the way of salvation.

If I have led a pure life—and I have lived fifty years and no one has questioned it, either friend or foe—if I have done in my sphere of life all I could to help the individual, irrespective of creed or nationality or color; if in my own immediate relation to my Church, her laws and her authority, there has never been a cause of complaint against me in half a century, I surely should have here to-night the highest representative of my religion, either in person or by letter, to give evidence of the truth that I have been always true to my engagements with the Catholic Church, for which I have lived so long, and for which I have always been and am still ready to die.

It gives me the greatest pleasure, therefore, to tell this large audience that I received from Rome, last Sunday, the blessing of the Holy Father, Leo XIII.

To be ready to accept sacrifice even unto death is the greatest evidence of fidelity man can show to man and to his God. Some count honors and dignity as among

the essentials in human life. I have always kept before my mind duty as the only thing that gives pleasure and happiness. All else is vanity and affliction of spirit.

There can be but one charge brought against me, and it has been so frequently referred to, and brought before the reading public, not only here but all through the State, particularly during the controversy for the Regency, that I am at liberty to state my mind fully on this subject, and set it at rest forever. In standing up for an old and very dear friend, the eloquent and patriotic defender of the single tax doctrine and the champion of labor and the poor, I had the daring to write to the Head of the Church (it was daring in the mind of others, not in my mind) and say to him : Holy Father, the assumption of any one authority to excommunicate an American citizen in the name of the Catholic Church, because such citizen thinks aloud on public questions, especially open, debatable, economic ones, will awake again the Know Nothing spirit among our people, and bring out a movement that will put back the Church in her march to success fifty years. For, I stated, this man was the advocate of the dependent citizens of America, and his condemnation will cause a great defection from the Church, as many whom this great citizen labored to benefit were of the Catholic faith. They were immigrant people among us, who have to start from the lowest rung of the ladder before they can reach to any degree of independence and prosperity. This is all my offending, in the case of one of the best, the purest, and the most devoted citizens to justice, to truth, and to the growth of Catholicity in his own native land—of any and of all the Catholic priests known to me during my ministry. If I should ask this audience, so representative as it is, did I violate any principle in standing up for a dear brother priest, and especially because of the reasons assigned? I know, as free men, I have your approval, and for the honor of my religion I am glad to be able to say that all this has been reversed by the Pope himself looking into the matter, with all the decisions rendered against Dr. McGlynn.

I need not tell you how much I have had to suffer from those who were wont to call men who hated human slavery Black Republicans. A curse on prejudice and ignorance! You are the bane of the human family. As long as you have existence anywhere among men there can be but little peace and charity! It was with these enemies of Christian civilization I had to contend all my public life in America.

When the war necessitated the demand that every lover of liberty and the republic should show his hand or be branded everlastingly as a traitor, I dared to leave my record to time. Hence I took sides once for all with the patriots that said they would die to save one nation to the highest cause of Christian civilization, where true merit would find its reward. To let such a nation, providentially brought into existence on the basis of liberty and equality, perish in bloody conflict, would be sad, indeed. The human family would go back to that from which it emerged—absolutism and slavery. A disrupted country would be America, no more the home

of the brave and free. Two sovereignties would conflict on the North American continent. Two flags could never fly side by side to signify unity and peace. And so said all the brave men who fought under Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan, and all the other brave leaders in the years of rebellion. It was the American soldiers who won for us the proud preeminence of being the safest and most trustworthy civil organization as a free nation that the world has ever known. Let, then, the American citizen soldier be forever honored who has done his work so well, and, in doing so, has left to posterity an example of self-devotion and patriotism which will ring joyous notes down the ages, so that American patriotic citizens may always be relied upon to do good and faithful services for father-land in times of war, as in times of peace. The American citizen being the shield in war and the industrious, peaceful member in a great and prosperous nation in times of peace, we can always trust this citizen soldier who takes to war because it is in the line of duty, and is at home in peaceful pursuits just for a similar reason. Duty in both spheres of activity gives the citizen a place in the warm affections of the family, in the confidence of the community, and in the admiration of the country for which he feels and bleeds. There may be degrees in my charity, but I am not ashamed to say it, that all-peaceful as is my natural disposition, and is also the nature of my calling, my soul awakens to the highest regard for the soldier of the Union who laid down his weapons of war when peace was proclaimed, and went back to the plough and his counting-house, and the other pursuits which were in his line of duty before he answered the summons to shoulder his musket and be drilled for the terrible conflict. I give you an inside view of the workings of my soul for the last fifty years. It labored for God and revealed religion ; and in doing so the children of God were never for a moment forgotten, and the children of God with me would include even Ingersoll. No one can be beyond my most earnest sympathy. I love to do the most good where it is most needed. Such has been my life in the past—the same it shall be in the future. And while a merciful Father will bless me with health and understanding, I will ever be with Him, always showing mercy, blessing the weak and the strong alike, the Jew and the Gentile, the Protestant and the Catholic, the Democrat and the Republican. And you, dear friends, and all who have taken an active part in this celebration, will be remembered by me in time and in eternity.”