

moved away a little. Then turning, she said, rather hoarsely, "I didn't understand—if you did. I thought—" a spasm crossed her face. "Tell me about it now," she added wistfully.

It was easily enough told, Jimmie thought, but try as he would he could not make it sound otherwise than weak and sordid and foolish. You can condone your own indifference to your early faith and explain it to yourself with perfect lucidity, but explaining it to others—to Mary—that was different. Logic was not his strong point. All he knew was, he wound up rafter desperately, that he had drifted away from the Church and had no slightest desire to return. This with some bravado.

Mary had not interrupted him, only fixed on him a direct regard, in which, confusingly, he could read wonder, pain, bewilderment. However, as his halting story proceeded the pain had lessened a trifle, and when he finished she said gently, "But Jimmie, I don't think you've lost your faith. I think it's only indifference. Many people have felt that way at times. You have to conquer it, by prayer . . . and the sacraments. Wait!" as he started to speak. "Listen, Jimmie, I know if you took up the practice of your religion—if you would—everything . . . would come right."

He shook his head decidedly. "No," he uttered. "That would be hypocritical. I—I couldn't, Mary—" "Not if I asked it, Jimmie—" "Don't ask it!" he begged in an agonized tone. "I'd hate to refuse you anything, Mary, but—but my conscience is my own—I have to follow it!" That was a good point, he felt, anyhow.

"Ah!" the girl gave a deep sigh. "I'm sorry that it leads you away from me!"

"What! Would you throw me off just for that? Are you so narrow, so un-Christian—" Mary straightened angrily. "I will not marry a Protestant!"

"But I am not a Protestant—" "You're not a Catholic, are you?" incisively. "You say you're not," as he remained angrily silent.

"Then you're nothing worse than nothing! It's no use!" flinging out her hands in despair. "No use to talk about it if you . . . good-bye, Jimmie." She rose and held out her hand, trying bravely to smile.

"And you mean this," he began, pale and trembling, "you mean this to be the end . . . and I suppose you call yourself a good Catholic at that!"

There was much more before they finally parted, he in his fury and soreness of heart saying many bitter things. Never had he expected such a development as this, secure as he was in the knowledge of Mary's fealty and love. He had expected to be something of a disappointment to her—yes, but he had not counted on this other, more tragic disappointment to both. He was sorry for her too, he conceded that much. But of course it was her fault, not to take him as he was, a man, at least, whose probity or enterprise had never been questioned.

"But that's religion for you!" he soliloquized furiously as he left the house. He was through with it, and its pretensions!

But, such is the irony of life, religion was not through with him. During the next six months his father, who had never been a Catholic, decided that he wished to die in the faith which his wife had professed and to be buried by her side. He had been ailing for some time. He knew he had a fatal disease and very simply he set about preparing for the end. The priest he consulted gave him books, came often to see him, talked with him on mooted subjects. The love of God dawned on the sick man like a revelation of perfect beauty and peace. He was very happy. Jimmie found himself inexpressibly touched by his father's new happiness. He could not help recalling, unwillingly enough, what Mary had said to him in that last drastic meeting. One thing especially.

"Maybe it's true, as you say, that you don't feel the need of religion," was what she had said sorrowfully. "But when temptation comes, or sorrow, or sickness—or death."

"Old stuff!" Jimmie tried to say to himself cynically these long months after, when with an aching heart he watched his father slipping day by day into the valley of the shadow, supported and comforted by the very things which his son had allowed to drift out of his own life. The very air of the house was permeated with the faith of the dying man. And when one day Father Curran said to Jimmie, with an odd, weighing look, "Your father says it would make him very happy if you would receive Holy Communion with him in the morning."

Well, why not. Anything to make his father happy in those last hours. And then . . . But grace has its own intangible way of working, quite beyond the power of the finite human intellect to comprehend. He had indeed met up with sorrow, sickness and death, far sooner than either he or Mary could have dreamed, and he had found that it was "the shade of His hand, outstretched chasteningly."

The sorrow staid with him, for he had lost Mary. She had married, he heard, a childhood sweetheart and had gone west with him.

So it was rather a melancholy pilgrimage he was making today, to walk down Hazard Place, linger a moment in the little park, now green and lovely in the first fragrance of spring, then on to St. Brendan's. He loved the old church and its dusky silence, and as he knelt in the last pews the votive lights around the statue of Our Lady glowed like so many golden lilies at the feet of their rightful queen. He went up and lit one himself and knelt for a moment at the Blessed Virgin's altar. As he came out his sense of melancholy deepened. He was so lonely. . . . Perhaps it was written that he always would be. He sighed as he reached the steps, and glancing up, saw Mary.

"I haven't seen you in a long time," he stammered inanely as they shook hands.

The girl smiled a little. "Why, no," she said. "I've been away. I joined my cousin and her husband in the west last year. He just died, poor fellow," with a short sigh, "and I brought Mary back home with me."

"Mary?" in a puzzled tone. "My cousin and namesake, Mary Kennedy. She was married two years ago. He had to go west on account of his health."

"And I thought it was you!" She gave him a queer look and a new apprehension shook him. "Or are you married too?" he asked hastily.

"No," she said. Then, innocently, "Are you?"

He shook his head and his heart began to beat tumultuously.

"I want to tell you, Mary—" She interrupted softly. "I heard about it, Jimmie, from Father Curran."

Almost unconsciously they turned their steps back to the little park, where enchantment waited and loneliness fled away forever.

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It is impossible to tell the quality of tea by the appearance of the leaf. A rough, coarse, unevenly rolled tea may taste much better in the cup than a closely rolled, well tipped tea that looks much finer. The only way to be sure of getting tea of reliable quality is to buy a tea like "Salada," whose goodness and purity are guaranteed.

SAINT JOSEPH

March is dedicated to St. Joseph. Great, indeed, is the dignity of St. Joseph and many are the titles which should claim for him our love and devotion. His august position in the Holy Family must gain for him our deep reverence, and his loving condescension towards his clients cannot fail to inspire confidence in the hearts of all who invoke him. His influence to obtain favors from God is potent, no matter what the nature of our necessities may be, but there is one grace, the most important of all, of which St. Joseph under Divine Providence seems to be the special custodian—the grace of a good death.

It is not hard to understand why St. Joseph has been honored with this title "Patron of a Happy Death." His own happy passage from time to eternity had within it all that could lessen the pain of death. It was but a short separation from Jesus and Mary, whose love had filled his heart during life, with the assurance of soon being reunited with them in heaven. Jesus consoles and fortifies him with words and looks of love, and Mary attends him with tenderest affection. How blessed will we be if near us in our last moments are Jesus, Mary and Joseph!

Nothing is of any consequence in this world, unless in some way, directly or indirectly, it prepares us for a good death. The moment of death is the decisive moment of our existence. On the condition of our soul in the presence of its Judge at that instant, depends its eternity of happiness or misery. The things of earth have faded away, and naked and alone the trembling soul awaits its sentence. Can there be any affair so important in life as preparation for this final trial before the Judge, whose judgments never err and from which there can be no appeal?

The saintly life of St. Joseph was the prelude to the blissful death which crowned his career on earth. Always and in all things he sought to do the will of his Creator. It is piously believed that, like St. John the Baptist, he was sanctified before birth. His heart, therefore, beat always with love for God, and his every action was performed in His service. His life, although sweetened by the companionship of Jesus and Mary, was one of poverty, hardship and many severe trials. Yet his confidence in God never was shaken, and everything was endured with perfect patience and resignation. To such a life the only conclusion was a happy death.

It is a vital necessity for each of us to imitate in our own imperfect way the preparation that St. Joseph made for death. We cannot avoid death, and therefore it is the part of wisdom to make ready for it, so that instead of a grim monster it may become to us but the passage way, albeit a painful one, to an eternity of happiness. This we can do by taking St. Joseph as our model in the practice of humility, purity, self-denial, patience and resignation in everything to the

will of God. We should frequently meditate upon death, and observe if our lives are such as we would wish them to be when that dread moment arrives. No day should pass, in which we did not implore that Jesus, Mary and Joseph would be with us in our last hour, and very frequently should be on our lips the invocation, "St. Joseph, Patron of a Happy Death, pray for us—Sentinel of the Blessed Sacrament."

THE VIRGIN BIRTH AGAIN

The Right Rev. Charles Fiske, D. D., Episcopal Coadjutor Bishop of Central New York, in a letter to a Modernist priest, comes pretty near explaining the difficulty of the whole present-day Modernistic School of alleged theologians when he questions its faith in a dogma more radical even than the Virginal Birth. They do not believe in the Incarnation, they do not believe in the divinity of Christ. The Bishop's words are plain and intelligible:

"Is it not true that rejection of the Virgin Birth usually ends in rejection of the Deity of Christ? Does not an examination of the history of the Modernist Movement show this? . . . Is it not true that the words which they declare their faith in the divinity of Christ are already confused and uncertain? What they call His divinity is only something higher in degree than what they find of divinity in men."

According to the Coadjutor Bishop many of the Modernists do "not believe in an Eternally Existing Person, who was in the form of God and became man." Their conception of Christ is "the conception of a perfect, sinless man who somehow became exalted into the divine."

In that view the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity does not condescend to man. He stays severely in the bosom of the Father. By some process not explained in the Sacred Scriptures man is exalted to the Deity. The idea of the Incarnation, or of the Son of God's coming into human flesh is something entirely remote from Modernistic theology. The Bishop declares as much in specific terms:

"I am not wrong in thinking that English and American Modernists of the radical school, in denying the Virgin Birth, have started on the road to denial of the Incarnation." Bishop Fiske cannot understand why men who accept the Incarnation hesitate to accept the Virgin Birth. Why not question the greater miracle? The Bishop's words are again plain and searching:

"If the greater miracle of the Incarnation has honestly been accepted, then the whole question of the possibilities of the miraculous interventions on the part of God is settled. Why stumble at the birth, unless—and this is the searching question—one is really stumbling at matter what the larger faith?"

To an outsider it looks very much as though the Coadjutor Bishop of Central New York has little or no faith in the Christian orthodoxy of his fellow clergymen of the Modernistic School. Do you believe that Christ was God, is the question which he might put to any one of his inferior clergy. If the answer is yes, then the person interrogated might further be asked: if such is your belief, then why do you insist that the coming of the Lord into the flesh is like the coming of any other son of Adam? Is it not asking rather too much of the Deity to have Him begotten by a being so unworthy and so inferior as a son of the fallen race? Again the Coadjutor Bishop speaks to the point:

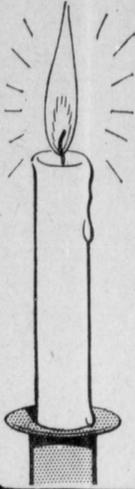
"This leads me to feel that the rejection of the Virgin Birth—or readiness to minimize its importance,—springs out of indefiniteness of understanding as to the meaning of the Incarnation itself. If the Church's faith is true, and the coming of Christ was an entrance into human life of an eternally pre-existing personality, I find in this something so without equal or likeness in all history, that the traditional account of the mode or manner of the entrance seems natural and reasonable. It would be almost unthinkable that such an event should be brought through the marital intercourse of two human persons."

Bishop Fiske has expressed the thought which must have occurred to any follower of the controversy who believes in the divinity of Christ. If God became man, it is not for human wisdom to tell Him how He should have accomplished this work of marvelous condescension. He elected the method dictated by His infinite Wisdom. Nor is it strange that the infinite wisdom of God should devise ways and means for divine conduct which would prove at variance with the ways and means devised by fallible human intelligence.

Bishop Fiske has written a letter to his Modernist friend which should bring the controversy now raging in the Episcopal Church to a head. The question is easily settled: Do you believe in the Incarnation of the eternally pre-existing Second Person of the Trinity? The question should be answered either by "yes" or "no." Those who answer yes might be counted of the household of the Episcopal faith; those who answer no should by that very response, excommunicate themselves from the company of believers. If the Bishops of the Episcopal Church are not prepared to draw that line of demarcation

and make that division, they will have betrayed their trust and made shipwreck of their church.—Catholic Transcript.

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