

even if I have to do it a quarter at a time." She spoke faster now. "I can't walk the streets with mother—and I can't let her guess what I'm up against."

The folded bill in the shabby bag seemed suddenly to have gained enormously in weight. Ernestine fingered the tarnished clasp with an overwhelming sense of emptiness. What an ugly world it was! For a tense moment she said nothing.

"You can't of course! Well, I'm sorry I worried you. There's a man at the office, perhaps—"

"Perhaps nothing!" Ernestine snapped. "I have ten dollars and of course you may have it for as long as you need. What would your mother think of your even dreaming of borrowing from any of those strange men. Viola, how can you?"

"Well, I haven't yet! Ernestine you're the dearest thing I know. Oh, I don't think I can eat a bite, but we'd better try and you can give me the money when we're paying the checks. Oh, I could scream. I'm so happy. Here's the restaurant. Then afterwards you can show me what you wanted me to see."

"Oh, it isn't anything, really, and besides we won't have time." Ernestine bit her lip.

That there should be so pitiless a downpour of rain, that night, was quite in keeping with God Friday's solemnities and her mood. Ernestine felt, as she ran across the street and through two pools, in an effort to catch the infrequent car which would take her to the Tenebrae services. Wet umbrellas had rendered the floor of the car another pool, so she sat far back in the uncomfortable seat and tried to hold her feet above the soaking boards. She was glad that she was alone. Ordinarily a friendly little soul, tonight the chatter of any of the care-free girls of the office would have been unbearable. It had been difficult to escape them, for she had half promised earlier in the week to make one of a group that planned to hear the Tenebrae at some church, convenient to a car line.

"They'll never come away over here, so I'm safe. I don't want to talk and I don't want to hear them talk, about new hats and gloves and suits," she decided. As the car rattled over the river, Ernestine shivered. "But of course Viola had never dreamed of so dreadful a solution as that. Yet other girls—" she told herself and then the car had stopped before the great doors and she was trying to raise her umbrella in the teeth of the wind.

The great church, dimly lighted as yet, for having hurried away to avoid riding down town with Viola, Ernestine was among the earliest comers, held the odors of Holy Thursday's incense high up among its ornate arches. With every attempt of the boisterous wind to make entrance with a devotee occupied in closing his dripping umbrella, a soothing breath of air from the consecrated fragrance floated down, enveloping the girl whose exhausted body and soul clamored for help outside of her being, and brought her a sense of peace.

By the time the lights, not too many, had flared up and the seats as far as she could see were filled, Ernestine was able to meet the loving eyes of Raphael's Madonna and whisper, "It does not matter now. Nothing matters but this!" She had found the place in her Holy Week book, and even read the first Nocturn and two of the Psalms as she waited, but now as the opening tones came out of the sleepy silence, swelling, deep with penitential timbre, she closed her book and tired eyes, content to take the message through a single sense.

The rain had lessened, when she emerged, a slight figure, almost lost in the throng that surged over the steps to the street and was still coming from the church. "The wind is not so bad. It isn't so very late. It's a little warmer, too. The top or even the inside of the bus would be better than that awful looking car," she said as she successfully rounded the corner of the street. But rounded it was all, for the next instant she was caught, and stood unable to go forward or back by the unexpected onslaught of a recreant gale. Not satisfied with turning her umbrella inside out, it tore the sober brown hat from her head and whirled it across the street, not neglecting to dip the tuft of coral feathers in five puddles on its way.

"Oh," cried Ernestine. This was the last straw. She grasped her umbrella by the ribs, without attempting to right its cover, and ran after the little hat. One step, and she darted back again to the comparative safety of the sidewalk, not daring to dispute the right of way with two luxurious horn-toting limousines.

"Here you are. I hope the color doesn't run. If it does my best hanky is ruined," said a laughing voice so close that she jumped. "Well, suffering grasshoppers, if it isn't Ernestine Curtis! Were you at church? So was I. I promised your mother six months ago, that I'd look you up, the first thing, but I lost the address she gave me, honestly I did. And well, I really was ashamed to write and tell her so." He gave the druggled but still brilliant tuft of feathers a final dab. "And to think it was this cute little hat that—found you for me—or rather found me for— Well, what am I trying to say?"

Which way do you go home?" His laugh was infectious and as she pressed the "cute little hat," fortunately dry as to its lining, upon her damp hair, Ernestine smiled for the first time since she had known that her Easter hat must be sacrificed, and confidently thrusting her broken umbrella into the outstretched hand of the "boy next door" led the way to the misty lights of the boulevard.—Alice G. Hayde.

GOSPELS, CREEDS AND CHURCHES

Wilfrid Parsons, S. J., in America
What is the issue at stake in the present religious controversy in the Protestant Churches? It is indeed curious to see how many answers there can be to this simple question. To a Modernist like Dr. Grant the question is whether modern science or ancient tradition is to rule men's beliefs. To an independent like Dr. Guthrie the question is whether the Christian is bound by any authority in matters of religion. Dr. Manning assures us that the only issue in his Church is whether those who have accepted office as ministers of the Church are under obligation to teach the faith which that Church holds. To others still the whole question resolves itself into whether the Apostles' Creed has any binding power on men's minds. To a Catholic, however, looking on from outside, the whole dispute comes down to this: what ultimate foundation, if any, has the Protestant for the beliefs which he holds? Can he hold the Virgin Birth and the Divinity of Christ and still be a logical Protestant?

All the sermons, the manifestos, the interviews, the debates betray behind their false front of smiling assurance this haunting doubt: Are we sure that God gave a Revelation? and if so, whence comes that surety? Those who stand on the shifting middle ground of ordinary Protestantism must sooner or later step to one or other side, to Modernism which asserts there is no ground of certainty for knowing that God gave a Revelation, or to the Catholic Church which offers a firm and infallible foundation for being sure that God has spoken to man through Jesus Christ. An orthodox clergyman like Dr. Manning offers as the rule of the Christian's faith, the Apostles' Creed. But whence does the Creed obtain its certainty? Who guarantees it? What does it stand on? How do we know that it is true? To take one's stand on the Creed and then leave the Creed nothing to stand on is to commit oneself to a dizzy feat of dialectics. This difficulty, fundamental to the Protestant position, because there is no foundation for any intellectual position in their religion. Religion, say they, is merely an interior motion by which man goes to God. Doctrines, dogmas, theology, all these are not matters of religion at all, but matters of science. Religion for these men is merely a subjective motion, and truth in religion matters not at all. It is entirely logical in these Protestants to come to this conclusion because when Protestants denied the authority of the Church to witness infallibly Christ's Revelation, they took away all intellectual foundation from their religion. Religion is emotion. You can believe what you choose, if it helps you to realize that emotion.

Hence we are faced with three modern positions. The traditional Protestants are trying to retain all the great truths of the Christian religion. They have already rejected the Divinely guided infallible teaching body as the sure witness to that truth. They tried to hold on to the Bible as an infallible guide, but were not able to defend it against the attack of modern higher criticism. Besides, the Bible, a mere book, does not answer modern difficulties, nor has it any value except as guaranteed as a truth-telling book by the Church which sanctioned the book and presented it to the world as an inspired set of writings. Protestants then fell back on the Creed, or set of sentences setting forth various facts and doctrines for men's belief. But the Creed as the sole rule of faith has the same weakness as the Bible. Without the authority of the Church it has nothing to stand on, nothing to convince us it is true. The Modernists, more logical, gave up the task of seeking a foundation for religious truth, denied the authority of Church, Bible and Creed, and put religion squarely in the realm of emotion. Doctrines, they say, are constantly changing; science explodes the old truths and presents new ones. But they remain matters of science, and are outside religion entirely. You can be a good Christian without them.

The Catholic position is unlike either of these. Man is composed of body and spirit. The spiritual part of man has a will and an intellect. Religion is the homage given to God by the whole man, body, will and intellect. With man's intellect he does homage to God by believing in the

truths God has revealed. Though he may not understand these truths, he believes them on the mere word of God. He thus does Him the supreme honor we do man in a lesser sphere, when we accept him at His word. By man's will he does homage to God by loving Him for Himself alone, because He is the supreme good and object of all love. With the same will, he trusts to God through all the trials and pains of life in earth. He trusts to God's help to bring him through safely, if man does his part, to the haven of eternal happiness. With man's body he does God homage by the external acts of worship he performs either vicariously through a priest, or directly by assisting at public worship. Thus the whole man devotes acts of each faculty he possesses to God. That is religion. But it must be well remembered that the first in this series of acts is the intellectual act, the act of faith in God. Without that act no other of the acts could be performed. It lights the way. It guides all the other acts, necessarily, for without knowledge there is no reasonable act; and our service of God is a reasonable service.

Now observe how this bears on the present controversy. See what a ruin Protestantism brought into this harmonious system of religion, which the whole world once accepted. The act of believing is the first act. We cannot believe God unless we know that God has spoken, and what He has said. Since God does not speak to each one of us directly, we must find out what He has spoken and what He has said from someone else. It was Christ who brought this message from God. Christ confided this message to a socially organized body called the Church. This Church through some of her officials gave the world a set of writings called the Gospels. The purpose of these Gospels was not to present the whole of Christ's message from God; the Church performed that office both before and after the Gospels were written. The purpose of the Gospels was to present to the world the Person of Jesus Christ, to win credence for Him, and for those whom He sent to teach the world.

The first Protestants, finding themselves at odds with the Church, denied the authority of that Church to rule their faith, though Christ had clearly given that power to the Church. But the first Protestants did not deny all of the doctrines which the Church then held. They tried to hold on to many of them. To do this they say they appeal to some authority guaranteeing those doctrines to be the true Revelation from God. This authority they declared to be the Gospels. But what good were the Gospels without the Church? It was the Church which gave the Gospels to the world. It was the Church which guaranteed them to be true statements of fact. The Gospels, moreover, did not pretend to give all of God's revelations; to do that, say the Gospels, is the function of the Church, a living teacher. There is no Scriptural warrant for saying that all of Christ's Revelation is contained in the Gospels. On the contrary, St. John distinctly says the opposite. (John, xxi, 25.) Take away therefore, the authority of the Church, and you take away all reasonable motive for believing not only those truths which the Gospels do contain, but also all the other truths revealed by Christ, and taught by the Church. Since then all reasonable motive for believing that God had revealed anything was taken away, the very foundation-stone of religion, faith, was taken away.

It is fair to say that for a time the Protestants did not see this fact. They went on believing they had a reasonable foundation for their faith. It remained for the Modernists to show them they had no such foundation. Protestantism had reduced the search of truth to a purely private affair, and religion became a matter of views, opinions, attitudes, positions, all of which words so commonly used show clearly the lack of any true certainty in those who hold those views, opinions, etc. These views, opinions and so forth were held by Protestants on the basis of each man's free interpretation of what he conceived to be the witness of the Gospels. The Modernists showed the world what on the old Protestant denial of authority in any Church this so-called witness of the Gospels was no witness at all, for without an infallible Church it had nothing to fall back on, no witness to show that in its turn the witness of the Gospels is a true witness.

What then is the present position of earnest God-fearing Protestants? With Bishop Manning they present to their followers, as basis for belief, the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds. But the creeds are merely formulas once drawn up by the Church as authentic statements of what the Faithful must believe. They have as much value as the Church which presents them as authentic. He who denies that the Church is an infallible authority denies also the infallibility of the creeds. Without an authentic Church, no creed is authentic. As a matter of fact, however, Bishop Manning seems to flinch from presenting the creeds as really binding with Divine authority. In his sermon in New York, reprinted in the Living Church for February 9, he seems to view the creeds much as we look on the platform of a

political party. He who subscribes to the plank of this platform, that is, the articles of these creeds can belong to the organization of the Church; he who cannot accept these articles must leave the Church. But the question is not whether this or that man can subscribe to the Church's platform, but whether that platform is or is not a true statement of God's Revelation. Taken in this essentially Protestant sense the creeds are undoubtedly a fair bond of union to all who accept them. But what sound reason has anybody for accepting them as true, as long as he denies the authority of the only witness we have for showing them to be true? Of what avail is it to subscribe to a set of articles, unless we know those articles to be true? And how do we know those articles to be true unless on the authority of her who received them from Christ, the living, teaching, infallible Church, founded by Christ? There is no escaping this argument, for it presents the only sound conclusion: that established by Christ Himself in the Gospels.

HIDDEN SAINTS

"Hidden are the saints of God; hidden are the world's benefactors," says Cardinal Newman. Not merely occasional acts were the noble acts of God's heroes, the saints. They followed in swift succession recurring day after day with no diminution of fervor, no lessening of a holy ambition, and with the high motive of pleasing God first of all.

Men of science have done much for us, especially in recent days. They have lessened the physical pains of mankind by their unwearied experiments and study. They have improved and perfected instruments and appliances of various kinds whereby man may live with greater comfort and safety, and may enjoy a fuller appreciation of the wonders of the universe.

But men of faith have done even more for us. Now and again the icy hand of death strikes down one of these hidden saints who for years, it may be, has been plodding courageously on in hunger and privations through some far wilderness in order to bring the light of God's doctrine to starving and ignorant souls.

Only recently we had one such striking example. In the far reaches of ice and snow of the frozen North, a holy missionary took his way on errands of charity. This errand was singularly childlike and simple. He was going to carry some trifling gifts, picture cards and possibly a few sweaters to the little Catholic children of a distant orphanage in the wilds. He was striving in this manner to bring to their minds the memory of the little Christ Child who came on Christmas night to be our precious Gift.

The good missionary, we know, never reached his destination. The little children were destined to pass their Christmas without the added pleasure that the little gifts would have brought. But we feel sure that when the sad yet glorious news of the good priest's death reached them, it served as the best lesson that he had ever taught.

In the far Alaskan wilds this faithful son of St. Ignatius laid down the burden that he had carried so faithfully and long. With no one to assist him, to administer the Last Sacraments, his death was not unlike that of the great Apostle, Xavier whose brother in Christ he was. No murmured words of consolation or blessing there were when this valiant soul went bravely forth to receive his surpassing reward, but only a dumb companion, a dog, sent out into the icy wastes a long trail of sorrow for one whom he had loved and served.

Had are the Saints of God, said the Great Cardinal. But in death how glorious they are! Then it is that the whole world suddenly awakes to the astounding realization of how much some souls will do, and dare for Christ.

Then it is that men, reading the glorious accounts of the last moments of a martyr, feel within them the keen, swift and relentless thrust of a sword of shame, sorrow and regret. For within every man lies great possibilities of heroism, of sacrifice, of nobility . . . and yet the majority are content to plod along satisfied with the poor paltry glittering baubles that the world gives to him who serves its will.

The Holy Father, Pius XI., hearing of the heroic work performed by a band of missionary priests amid the ice-bound regions of the far North, no doubt recalling his Alpine experiences said, "Ah, the brave workmen! I have always thought that very great qualities, both physical and mental, are needed by our missionaries in such regions—a great valor, physical and moral."

Now and again we read that a noble nation, in recognition of some act of worldly heroism on the part of its sons, has decorated one or more of them with a medal "for valor." No such decoration adorns the lifeless breast of the dead priest in the Alaskan snows. But such would be superfluous. For it was not for this that he labored and waited, but rather for the eulogium of His Beloved Master: "Faithful servant! Well done!"—The Pilot.

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