"A BRUSH WITH THE VICAR-GENERAL"

Father Connell had rung his bell several times without a response. Being pressed for time, he went out into the hall, and standing at the head of a stairway called out sonorously :

"Delia ! Delia, are you there ?"

Almost at once, steps were heard ascending, as a rosy-faced, well-ordered woman of middle-age, hurried into view, her spotless apron, dainty collar, and the scrupulous perfection of her whole person, proved that she held a responsible position, and valued herself accordingly.

Delia Boyle was housekeeper at St. Peter's Presbytery, and would have scoffed at any one who assailed the dignity of her high office. To be privileged to minister to the wants of the priesthood was, in her opinion, honor and glory enough for anyone, but to be housekeeper for Father Connell, she would have set aside the most flattering offers." Nothing could have induced her to swear from her devoted loyalty to the good priest.

"Did ye call me yer riverence ?"

"Oh you're here at last, Delia ! Sure I thought you'd gone to Canon Doyle's this time !"

"Niver fear Father ! I like St. Pether's too well."

"But what can I do for ye, Father ?"

"If Mr. Bates calls tell him I will be in about 10 o'clock, and ask him to wait for me."

"Very well, yer reverence."

The school-bell across the way had ceased ringing, and Father Connell, taking up his hat and stick, hurried off on his daily task of hunting up the tardy ones, who, unless they were present at roll-call, would lose the mark for attendance.

No matter how proficient in study, no scholar was eligible for examination, unless he had been present at school at a certified number of times during the year. Even if he came one moment late, his attendance did not count, and the government grant, so necessary for the support of the school, was often lost thereby. Realizing the importance of this, Father Connell invariably went the rounds of streets near the school where the majority of the children lived.

As he traversed the different lanes and by-ways, many a female parishioner hurried out of sight. Those who happened to be neat and tidy stood their ground to salute their pastor.

He knew in his warm sympathetic heart that it was shame at being caught unprepared, which made a few seem shy of meeting him, and went on his way as if he saw them not. But those familiar with him knew that nothing escaped his keen vision.

A belated troop of boys and girls of all ages and sizes clattered down the stony High St. as Father Connell appeared in sight. Here and there, in twos and threes, they went down on the run, and at last the streets seemed empty of all juvenile humanity.

Satisfied that he could now return to confer with the waiting Mr. Bates, in reference to a new class-room ordered by the inspector, Father Connell turned the corner of High St. into the Lower Road, where he collided with a small boy wheeling coal in a barrow.

The little pinched form, flushed and panting, almost collapsed at sight of the priest, and stood stricken motionless at the encounter.

"Ha ! So it's you, Paddy Kelly ! And what might you be doing ?"

"Please Fader, Granny sint me for de coal, an' I had to wait for so long for a barra' dat I'll be late for school."

"Why didn't you get it yesterday then ?"

"Bekase Granny had no money till she went to Binnits wid her shawl. An' little Eily's sick. I'm feared she'll die, Fader !"

Up went the grimy hands over the sorrow-laden eyes of the little lad, and he sobbed uncontrollably.

That allusion to Bennett's meant that Granny had pawned her shawl—her chiefest treasure—to provide warmth for the sick baby.

"Look here, Paddy ! You're as black as the coal in the barrow ! Come over here to Mrs. O'Leary, and wash yourself."

He took the dirty little hand in his big, warm, clean one, and nodding to the kindly woman, standing at her door across the way, asked her help in the matter of making Paddy presentable.

"But the coal, Fader ? What will I do about it—an' Eily sick"

"You'll go down to school as quick as possible. Never mind the coal. 'Twill be all right. I'll see about it. Thank you, Mrs. O'Leary, and will you harry Paddy off to school at once ?"

"'Deed will I, Father !" and the worthy woman immediately set about her task. Without a moment's hesitation, Father Connell grasped the handles of the barrow, and pushed it up the steep ascent, which led once more to High St.

"Glory be ! Do ye see Father Connell pushin' a wheelbarra' ! An' me bad wid this ould rheumatiz', or I'd go do it for him. 'Tis a schandal for anny wan to let him do it !"

Old Molly Byrne's husband said :

"I'm thinkin' Father Connell wouldn't like me to intherfare, tho' 'tis glad I'd be to serve him, Molly !"

Looks of surprise were visible on many faces during the passage of this coal. Tommy Lynch, standing at the door of his grocery store, ran forward, and asked Father Connell to permit him to wheel the barrow.

"Well, do you know, Tom, 'tis good exercise. I could have pushed that barrow ten miles on a hilly road ten years ago, and never have felt it. I must be getting old, Tom !" said the priest laughing in his whole-souled, hearty way.

"Ould, is it, Father ? Fegs, 'tis in forty years from now ye may say so !" said vigorous Tom.

"Look here Tom ! 'Tis a mere nothing wheeling this. Go in now, and make up this order while I wait" and he wrote rapidly on a slip from his note-book, which he gave to Tom.

"Will I sind thim to St. Pether's, Father ?"

"Didn't I say I'd wait, man ? Look alive now, I'm in a hurry."

In a very short time the grocer, looking greatly puzzled brought out a goodly array of neat parcels, and having spread a big sheet of paper over the coal, he piled these compactly on top, at the desire of the priest.

"The bill, Tom !"

Father Connell held out some money to the mystified grocer, who stood with hands behind, making no effort to take it.

"Won't you let Dan be afther takin' thim goods for ye Father. 'Tisn't for the likes o' you to be cartin' home groceries—an' in a *barro'* too, save the mark !"

"Ha ha ! What ails the barrow, man. 'Tis all right Tom. They're for a poor soul wao needs them, and I'd sooner take them myself." "Put up the purse Father ! I'll not take a pinny from ye ! 'Tis little enough you lave yerself !"

And Tom Lynch, in spite of the priest's protests, fled incontinently. With a hearty "God bless your big heart, Tom !" Father Connell went his way, while Tom and his wife Nora were putting their heads together with intent to deprive him of the despicable wheelbarrow.

Granny Kelly, who had to take the place of mother also to her grandchildren, thought she sawanapparition, when the big sturdy form stopped at her poor door.

Father Connell, scolding her all the time for not informing him as to her needs, helped her with her load, until the various goods were safely bestowed.

"And now Mrs. Kelly, let me see the poor baby !"

He took the little suffering form in his arms and examined it closely, asking many questions, stroking the throbbing, burning head meantime. Almost at once Eily became quiet, her twitching limbs relaxed, and she slept !

"She'll sleep now, Mrs. Kelly. Don't be uneasy about her. You'll have her as well as ever in no time !"

As he spoke, he carefully laid the sleeping child in its grandmother's arms and went to the house of a near-by neighbor to enlist the help of a good woman on Granny's behalf. Returning he said :

"Mrs. Kavanagh is coming over to watch Eily, while you sleep awhile Granny."

"May the Lord reward you Father," and many another prayer flowed from her heart to her lips, as the good priest went his way trundling the empty barrow before him.

Passing through High street Tom Lynch waylaid the priest once more.

"Nora says can ye shtep over wan minute Father. She won't keep ye long."

Barely had they disappeared in the store, when young Dan Lynch quickly came out of the side door and with a hasty look of caution, laid hold of the barrow, which he dexterously whisked out of sight. He knew the owner, and had gone to return it, chuckling over the joke ever step he took.

When Father Connell once more emerged from the store the barrow was gone.

"What did you do with it Tom ?" was his query.

"Sure 'twas Nora put me up to it, Father ! She said we'd be disgraced av we let ye take it back to ould Johnson's. Av ye want a job like that done agin, Father, any wan o' us 'll be glad to do it for ye !"

"'Tis a conspiracy Tom !" said the priest, joining readily in the laugh against himself.

Father Connell thought nothing more of the service he had rendered except as a reminder of the poor Kelly's wants. The affair of the barrow had passed out of his mind, in the press of his many duties, but the episode was not allowed to subside so easily. It formed the subject of a sneering paragraph in an anti-Catholic local paper, which was promptly brought to book by a scathing letter from the pen of an Anglican minister. He was a warm personal friend and admirer of Father Connell, had seen the priest during his passage through High street and had turned a corner to avoid a meeting. He thought in this way to save the priest embarrassment, but Father Connell remained dignified under circumstances which to some natures brought confusion.

Even if the two friends had actually met that day, I have no doubt they would have resumed their perpetual argument anent "Faith and Works" in spite of the infelicitous presence of that deplorable wheelbarrow !

Scanning the news, Father Connell saw the manly, indignant epistle of the Rector and his heart warmed within him.

"A grand Catholic is lost in him ! May God give him the Faith ! Well ! Well ! Who could foresee that a poor half hundred of coal would cause such a ruction !"

Laughing heartily, he laid down the paper and took up his book to recite the Office.

In the house-keeper's room, Delia Boyle, her day's work ended, sat in deep thought. She seemed troubled. Dennis Mahon, a bright young Irishman and sexton of St. Peter's had told her about Father Connell's exploit, with much more than his usual gusto. He rehearsed the remarks which had been made, and pointed out the newspaper articles.

Delia had been at the head of affairs in the presbytery for fifteen years, during which time she was ever eagerly active in every effort which was conducive to the dignity of St. Peter's priestly guardians.

She looked upon their honor with jealous eyes, and no one dared make a disparaging remark about the priesthood in her presence. In spite of this, however, she was not to be deterred from scolding either parish priest or curate, if he by the smallest fault offended her sense of what was due to the dignity of his exalted position.

She was much upset, and thought that Father Connell had lost caste through contact with that "dirty ould barra !"

"Bridgie Connor ! 'tis thrue I'm tellin' ye ! She wint as red as foire, an' sorry I am I tauld her. Be the luk av her, she'll be for scowldin' himself !"

"Aw g'wan Dinny ! She'll niver dar to do it !"

"Why woman, ye cudn't shtop her ! She'd face the Bishop himself I b'lieve av he didn't plaze her, just as brave as a lion."

"Why what ails her at all, offerin' impidince to her shupariors ?"

Well 'tis this way—she is that anxious to see the priests respected that she's always watchin' for 'fraid anny wan 'ud be castin' shame on thim. Bedad you'd think she wor a Vicar-gineral at last the way she does be layin' down the law !"

"An' you think she'll dar to lecthure Father Connell ?"

"Sure she will ! but be the powers she'll meet her match av she does ! I'd like to be widin' hearin' o' the two o' thim."

And then Dinny went off to light up the church, muttering :

"Poor ould Vicar-gineral !"

This is how Delia became known to a select few by that ecclesiastical title.

It was the day before the charity sermon, and when Delia came for her orders into Father Connell's study, the priest said :

"Well Delia ! Do you know who will be here to preach the sermon ?"

"No, yer Riverence."

"Your old pastor, Father Brennan. I know you'll have everything nice for the good man."

"Oh indeed I will so. He's a gran' priest ! 'Tis he that knows what's jue to his dignity !"

"Ha ! There's a hidden meaning in that speech Delia. Come out with it ! Get it over, my good woman !"

"Well 'deed thin Father, 'tis too bad of ye to be wheelin' barra' loads o' coal through the parish !"—

"Half a hundred, in one barrow"—

"And givin' the chance to that low "Curator" for his nasty remarks. Faith whin ye carried ould Tom Harrinton's rag-bag—

"Not the rag-bag Delia, 'twas "—

Ye might just as well have done—well, whin ye carried his mane ould basket, wid the horn shticking up in wan ind av it, everybody talked about ye, an' I begged ye niver to do sich things agin ! Sure what's the use o' me thryin' to keep ye dacent at all ? Me heart is bruk wid ye, so it is !"

"Tommy Harrington was very ill, and I could not leave him lying helpless." said the big priest mildly.

"There's only wan thing ye didn't do !"

"And what was that, Delia ?"

"Ye didn't blow the horn ! 'Twas too bad ye forgot it."

"Now wasn't that a wasted opportunity ?"

"Well now Father, couldn't you have got some poor man to wheel the barra' for ye? Why will ye be handlin' sich dirty jobs—an' you, a gintleman?"

"That barrow is as bad as a nightmare! Anything else, Delia, while you're about it?" said he, with a whimsical look twinkling in the keen, blue Irish eyes.

"Well it seems ye don't care what people say av ye! Ye have no pride. What do some o' thim care for ye after all you done for thim? Didn't ye give ould Tim Nolan the coat off your back, an' I'll be bound you'd see it up in Binnitt's now, for he was dhrunk often since!"

"Tut, tut, Delia! One would think you went often to Bennett's, to hear you! I must put a stop to this!"

"Oh thin, ye can laugh Father Connell, but ye should be sorry for the disgrace ye bring on yerself."

"Indeed then I *am* sorry Delia!"

"Ye are?" she said, incredulously.

"Yes I'm very sorry I couldn't carry a ton of coal, instead of only fifty pounds, in that barrow!"

"Thin bad scran to that same ould barra'! Sure 'tis no use talkin', may the Lord give you sinse!"

"Delia, woman, why will you make a fuss over such a small matter?"

"Ye have inimies enough already. All thim papers do be layin' in wait to catch ye thrippin'—"

"I assure you on my honor, I never tripped once! 'Twas easy wheeling—"

"Well ye won't let me shpake me mind, but av ye demane yerself be doin' jobs like that again,' I declare to man, I'll go an' sarve Canon Dyle !"

"Well, now you listen to *me* Delia! *I* mean to be parish priest of St. Peter's as long as the Bishop lets me. You can' be housekeeper, and parish priest too! If you insist on telling me how to do my work, why shouldn't I come down to the kitchen to show you how to make the puddings, and such things?"

"But sure no gintleman would do it, yer Riverence!"

"Well if I so far forgot myself. Would you say that a housekeeper who lectured her priest was a lady?"

"Eh thin! Father Connell I ax yer pardin! 'Twas bekase it hurts me to see people makin' little o' ye that I spoke the way I did!" Delia stood abashed, with bowed head, for a moment, then she slid swiftly to her knees! The good priest's face was a study, as he looked down on the kneeling penitent.

It was with the greatest difficulty he restrained his sense of humor from having full sway.

If Delia had dared to raise her head, she would have seen that Father Connell was almost convulsed with suppressed laughter!

But of course, that would never do! One must draw the line somewhere! "Discipline must be maintained!"

After a final struggle for composure, he laid his hand on Delia's still downcast head, saying in tones, much as usual:

"Tut, tut, woman! God bless you! Get up out o' that! You'll spoil that nice apron!" She rose at once, and as she was hurrying from the room, with crimson cheeks, and eyes that blinked with tears, she was arrested by the priest's voice saying very clearly: "Delia, when will you be going to Canon Doyle's?"

Hearing this, her repentant mood in abeyance for the moment, she instantly assumed her wonted attitude of command, and quickly answered :

"Arrah thin, av he waits till I go, 'twill be till the Day o' Judgment, yer Riverence!"

From that day, Delia never presumed to censure Father Connell, but, as if to offset her forbearance in his regard, she never once waved her right to admonish the poor young curates!

TERESA M. GARDINER

April 20th, 1911.

He who does not make his religious duty one of his daily affairs is not especially zealous.

TWO VIEWS OF MODERN RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

By Robt. Hugh Benson in The Atlantic Monthly

There are two sharply defined views as to the significance of what is called "modern religious thought." The first—that of the thinkers in question—is that it marks the beginning of an epoch, that it has immense promises for the future, that it is about to transform, little by little, all religious opinions, and especially such opinions as are called "orthodox." The second view is that it marks the end of an epoch, that it is of the nature of a melancholy process at last discredited, that it is about to be re-absorbed in the organism from which it takes its origin, or lost in the sands of time. Let us examine these two points of view.

The modern thinkers take their rise practically, from the religious upheaval of the sixteenth century. At that period of Christendom the establishment of the principle of Nationalism in religion struck the first blow against the idea of a final revelation guaranteed by an infallible authority ; for the substitution, as a court of appeal, of a written Book for a living voice could only be a transitional step towards the acceptance of each individual, in whose hands the Book is placed, or himself as interpreter of it. Congregationalism followed nationalism, and individualism, (or pure Protestantism) congregationalism ; and since both disclaimed absolute authority, little by little there came into existence the view that "true religion" was that system of belief which each individual thought out for himself ; and, since those individuals were found not to agree together, "Truth" finally became more and more subjective : until there was established the most characteristically modern form of thought—namely that Truth was not absolute at all, and that what was true and imperative for one was not true and imperative for another. Further, the original acceptance of the Bible as containing Divine Revelation became itself modified by internal criticism and the discoveries of external science, until at the present day we find "modern religion" practically to consist in an attitude of mind, more or less Christian in sentiment, though often indignantly claiming the name ; in an ethical system and a belief in progress toward an undefined and only gradually realizable goal, rather than in an acceptance of a series of historical events and of dogmas built upon them.

On the other side stands that body of opinion represented by the Catholic Church, whose tenets are as they have always been—involving, and indeed founded upon, the idea that theology is not, as are the other sciences, merely progressive and inductive, but rather the working out, under Divine guarantees, of a body of truth revealed by God two thousand years ago.

We find then at the present day two mutually exclusive views of the future of religion. To the "modern thinker" it appears certain that the process begun almost instinctively in the sixteenth century, justified as it seems to be by the advance of science and criticism, will continue indefinitely, to the final destruction of the other view. To the Catholic it appears equally certain that the crumbling of all systematic authority down to that of the individual, and the impossibility of discovering any final court in Protestantism to which the individual will bow, is the death sentence of every attempt to find religious Truth outside that infallible authority to whose charge, he believes, truth has been committed. The view of the writer of this paper is emphatically the second of these two.

That the "modern system" has accomplished great things and made important contributions to thought, is of course, obvious. Much of the useful work that has been done recently, especially in the direction of popularizing science, as well as of correlating discoveries and compiling statistics, particularly in the sphere of comparative religion, has been done by these independent thinkers. But they have injured their own usefulness by assuming an authority which, by their own profession, they repudiate ; and by displaying an almost amazing ignorance of the significance of certain enormous facts, and even of the existence of the facts themselves. Let us enumerate a few.

It is usually assumed by the members of this school that the Catholic Church is the discredited Church of the uneducated and the poor. They seem to be entirely unaware that a movement is going forward amongst some of the shrewdest and most independent minds in all civilized countries, which, if precedent means anything, implies as absolutely sound the prediction of Mr. H. G. Wells that we are on the verge of one of the greatest Catholic revivals the world has ever seen.

When men in France like Brunetiere, Coppee, Huysmans, Rette, and Paul Bourget, come forward from agnosticism or infidelity ; when Pasteur, perhaps the most widely known scientist of his day, declares that his researches have left him with the faith of the Breton peasant, and that further researches, he doubts not, would leave him with the faith of the Breton peasant's wife ; when, in Great Britain, an Irish Protestant professor of biology, a professor of Greek at Glasgow, and perhaps the greatest judge on the bench, in the very height of maturity and of their reputation, deliberately make their submission to Rome ; when, within the last few months, the Lutheran professor of history at Halle, follows their example ; when two of those who are called "the three cleverest men in London," not only defend Catholicism, but defend it with the ardor of preaching friars ; when, in spite of three centuries of Protestantism, enforced until recently by the law of the land, the Catholic party in the English parliament once more has the balance of power, as also it holds it in Germany ; when, as is notorious the "man-in-the-street" publicly declares that if he had any religion at all, it would be the Catholic religion ; when a papal legate elicits in the streets of Protestant London a devotion and an hostility that are alike the envy of all modern "leaders of religious thought," and sails up the Rhine into Cologne to the thunder of guns and the pealing of bells ; when this kind of thing is happening everywhere ; when the only successful missions in the East are the Catholic missions, the only teachers who can meet the Oriental ascetics, the Catholic ascetics—surely it is a very strange moment at which to assume that the religion of the future is to be some kind of ethical pantheism !

Of course, all these phenomena are not for one moment advanced in support of the truth of the Catholic claim (beyond the fact that they do exhibit a power of recuperation in the Catholic Church which no other religious society has ever displayed in the history of the world,) but they are at least a very grave indictment of the extraordinary and fantastic visionaries of the academic mind which professes to deal with facts rather than a priori assumptions. Certainly arm-chair thinking is one essential in the pursuit of knowledge, but at least facts must be taken to the arm-chair. Certainly there is in Individualism the truth that each man has a mind of his own, but unless that mind is exercised on objective phenomena as well as on its inner consciousness, it will end in hopeless limitation, senility, and dreams. As Mr. Chesterton points out, the man who believes in himself most consistently, to the exclusion of cold facts, must be sought in a lunatic asylum.

A second criticism of "modern religious thought" is that it attempts to restrict to terms of a part of human nature that which is the affair of the whole of human nature ; it tends to reject all evidence which is not the direct object of the intellect in its narrowest sense. Mr. Arthur Balfour, in his Foundations Of Belief, put the truth about the matter in a single sentence, to the effect that any system of religion which was small enough for our intellectual capacity could not be large enough for our spiritual needs. Professor Romanes traces the beginning of his return from materialism to Christianity to the discovery of that same truth. He had always rejected, he tells us, the evidence of the heart in his search for religious truth, until he reflected that without the evidence of the heart no truth worth knowing can be discovered at all. The historian cannot interpret events rightly unless he is keenly and emotionally interested in them ; the sociologist cannot interpret events adequately unless he personally knows something of passion ; and more than all of this, the very finest instincts of the human race by which the greatest truths are arrived at—the principle of the sacrifice of the strong in the cause of the weak, for instance, all art, all poetry (and these are as objective as anything else), chivalry and the rest—all these things, with their exceedingly solid results in a thousand directions, could never have come into existence, much less have been formulated and classified, unless the heart had been followed, not only as well as the head, but sometimes even in apparent and transient contradiction to the head.

Now, modern religious thinkers are undoubtedly acute, but an acute point is more limited than a blunt one. They are acute, in that they dissect with astonishing subtlety that which they can reach ; but they do not touch so many data as can a broader surface ; and to seek to test all religion by a purely intellectual test, to refuse to treat as important such evidences as do not come within the range of pure intellect, is as foolishly limited and narrow-minded as to seek to deal with Raphael's Madonnas by a process of chemical analysis. I am not now defending mere emotionalism in attacking mere intellectualism : I am but arguing that man has a heart as well as a head ; that his heart continually puts him in touch with facts which transcend, though they need not contradict, mere reason ; and, with Romanes, that to neglect the evidence of the heart is to rule an eye-witness out of court because he happens not to be a philosopher or a trained detective. Man is a complex being whose complexity we name Personality ; and any system which, like religion, claims to deal with his personality must be judged by his personality, and not by a single department of it. If religion must be brought to the bar and judged, it is the sociologist, rather than the psychologist or the philosopher, who ought to wear the ermine ; for the sociologist, at any rate in theory, deals with the whole of man en masse and not merely with a selection of him. Our "modern thinkers" are not usually sociologists.

This, then, is the terrible and almost inevitable drawback of the specialistic or academic mind. It has studied so long one particular department of truth, that it becomes imbued with an idee fixe that there is no truth obtainable except in that particular department. Certainly these modern critics of supernatural religion are often learned men, and their names accordingly carry weight; yet, in nine cases out of ten, just because of their special knowledge—or rather because of the specialization of their knowledge, and their consequent loss of touch with life and thought as a whole—they are far less competent judges of the claims of religion than are those men with half their knowledge but twice their general experience. "I have searched the universe with my telescope," cries the astronomer, "and I have not found God." "I have searched the human body with my microscope," cries the biologist, "and I have not found the soul." But did they really expect it? "I have smelt Botticelli's Primavera, and I have detected no odor of beauty ; I have licked a violin all over, but I can find in it no passion or harmony."

So far we have glanced at a couple of very serious defects in the modern method ; but undoubtedly there are a great many more. For instance, these "modern thinkers" are perpetually assuming the attitude of standing alone in the world as independent and impartial observers ; and there is nothing more disastrous than this for a searcher after truth. For none of us are independent or impartial for one instant, ever, anywhere. Each of us begins with a bias, partly temperamental, partly educative, partly circumstantial. Possibly we may succeed in changing our point of view altogether, certainly we all modify it ; but we all do always, occupy some position from which we view the universe. You cannot observe a mountain unless you stand still ; and to stand still in one place implies the impossibility of standing still simultaneously in an other place.

To take one example of the unhappy effect of not being aware of this very fundamental fact, it is only necessary to glance at Biblical criticism. It is notorious that Biblical critics who have renounced Christianity claim above all others, to approach the Scriptures impartially ; but that is exactly what they do not do. They have already decided that the Christian interpretation of the Bible is untrue, that the Scriptures are merely the work of more or less acute or imaginative human minds ; and they therefore are obliged—of course unconsciously—to find evidence for their position. They discover, let us say, that in certain points there are apparent discrepancies in the accounts of Christ's ressurrection. "You see," they say, "we told you so. The stories do not even agree." A little further on they discover minute and accurate agreement in the various accounts. "You see," they repeat, "it is just as we said. Obviously Matthew has copied from Mark."

Now, I do not desire to blame these critics for taking a biased and prejudiced view of the Scriptures, for I have no doubt that I do myself ; but they do deserve blame for pretending that it is not so ; and what is worse, their ignorance of their own prejudice is an absolute bar to their making allowance for that prejudice. To use an unpunctual watch is not necessarily to be an unpunctual man ; he only is unpunctual who is unaware that his watch is so. And further, in the particular example that we have considered, the "impartial" thinker suffers under a yet further disadvantage, in that he is not vitally interested in what he studies—(how can he be ?). And not to be vitally interested is to be shortsighted. Only a lover can understand a love letter ; a father who watches his child drowning, or being rescued, sees more of what is happening, ceteris paribus, than another man who chances to be passing by. Love is not always blind; it is in nine cases out of ten far more clear-sighted than indifferent or even than philosophical interest.

To pass on, however, from mere criticism to more positive statement, it is necessary first to glance at the contributions of psychology to the controversy.

These "modern thinkers" rely to a large extent for their conclusions upon this very important and rapidly developing branch of science ; and say, quite rightly, that no religious system can stand for the future which does not take into account the new discoveries in this direction. They further add that an enormous number of phenomena hitherto considered as sanctions and evidences of supernatural religion have at last been accounted for by a greater knowledge of man's own inner nature, and that the miracles hitherto advanced by Catholics in support of their claims can no longer bear the weight rested upon them.

There is of course a very solid argument underlying these assertions, but an argument which it would be impossible to discuss within the limits of this paper. There are one or two observations to make, however which affect the weight of the argument very considerably.

TO BE CONTINUED.

THE SPIRIT OF GOD

FEAST OF THE PARACLETE, THE CHRISTIAN PENTECOST

By Right Rev. Dr. Garrigan

Pentecost Is the brief history of the crowning event in the dealings of God with man, of the consummation of the divine plans for the redemption and sanctification of the world, of the establishment upon earth of a divine perpetual medium of truth and grace between God and His Church and its members and individual human souls, as well as it is the history of a Christian Pentecost, on which the promised Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, the Third Person of the Most Adorable Trinity, descended in visible form on the infant Christian Church and endowed it with the fullness of divine faith, the fullness of divine authority, and the fullness and immortality of divine truth.

In fact we are celebrating the birthday of Christ's Church, when we are commemorating that lasting act of His, the mission of the Holy Ghost by which He revealed and promulgated His whole law, by which He infused the soul, as it were, in its mystical body, and thus implants in His Church the unfailing source of supernatural life and activity.

On this day then, the fiftieth after the Lord's resurrection, God sent down His Holy Spirit to renew the face of the earth, to regenerate human society and to perfect His Church, as well as to make the new alliance, the new covenant with His people, that new alliance which He had promised through the mouths of His prophets and His own Divine Son and which was the end, the consummation of all His remarkable designs in favor of mankind.

This is the Christian Church, and the fiftieth day for this sacred event is chosen in imitation of the Jewish Pentecost, on which not only to proclaim the Christian jubilee, the full and the real pardon of all sins and debts against God, the true redemption of mankind from the slavery of satan, but also proclaims the promulgation of the world's laws and the introduction of the new dispensation; and as the epistle tells us, "Therefore, when the days of Pentecost were accomplished they were all together in the same place, and suddenly there came a sound as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting, and then appeared to them tongues of fire, and it sat upon every one of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost."

In this simple but unworldly way the spirit of God came down to us with all graces through the merits of Jesus Christ.

CREEDLESS RELIGION

One of the formulas of Modernism in practical life is thus expressed. When the question of religious instruction in the school comes up, the Modernist rejects and repels what he characterizes as creeds, even in elementary instruction, though he is willing to admit "religion."

One might ask what is the difference between religion and creed. Until lately they were identical, the difference being only the difference of creed itself. But the new meaning attached to creed by the anti-religious element gives it a sinister character, and endeavors to fasten upon it something ugly and undesirable. It is like the attempt to depreciate Catholicity by coining for it the word clerical or to disfigure the beneficent influence of the Church by characterizing it as "priestcraft." Now the child is taught that he must be religious, but must not profess this or that form of religion, for that would be to have a creed. In his immature mind he cannot see that to reject all forms of religion is to reject religion itself, and this amounts to practical atheism.

The error has grown so huge and so grotesque that it sometimes seems useless to refute it, especially as it develops new forms and expressions daily to give some semblance of reason to the most absurd ugliness.

Atheism it is, at least practical and logical, which refuses to recognize or admit in the order of the world the existence and operation of God, or which rejects the divine influence in the history of humanity. Much more is it atheism to endeavor to explain the mysterious acts of creation and redemption without recurring to the divine operation of God. Now there is only one God, ever, always and forever ; that has always been so, and it cannot be other than so. And as there cannot be plurality in God, neither can there be plurality in God's religion. There can be only one religion, because there is only one God. Which is this religion ? It is an important question, because it touches our most important interest. The answer to that question—however you put it—is a creed. And thus our creed becomes for us not only the most important thing in religion, but religion itself. To speak thus of religion without creed is a contradiction in terms, is illogical, and hence unworthy of the attention of parents who care for the virtuous welfare of their children.—Pilot.

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