

at the instance of a violent pain that had threatened to steal her senses during the past half hour. But now, as she had witnessed the end of the ordination, she could keep up no longer. With the smile still on her face, her last conscious look was exchanged with her son as he passed down the aisle in his scarlet robes "a priest forever." Tenderly they bore her to the sacristy. Gently they made way for the white-faced young priest who was to begin his ministry on his ordination morning by anointing his dying mother.

"Per istam sanctam unctionem," each word from his grief-stricken heart came as if freighted with the love of a lifetime. To the kneeling ordinandi they seemed to take on even an imperious meaning, as with bowed heads and tear-dimmed eyes they felt the power of a priest's plea at the gates of eternity for his mother's soul.

At the hospital the doctors gravely shook their heads, and one of them, taking the young priest aside, said: "This is very sad, my dear young friend—very sad."

"Will she recover?" curly interrupted Father Reardon. "While there is life there is hope, you know and—er—miracles still happen."

"Which means briefly that nothing but a miracle will save her life?"

The doctor bowed as he answered "Nothing."

"God's will be done," said the priest.

Moirs entreated her brother to postpone his "First Mass" until Mrs. Reardon became better, or at least until she regained consciousness. She had been told that her mother would never be conscious again, hence she wondered when her brother insisted that he would say his First Mass the following morning.

Like to the First Priest's vigil was Father Reardon's preparation for his First Mass. With few intermissions, he knelt all night long in his room, feeling as much as human beings can feel the Agony in the Garden. All these years he had looked forward to this coming day. Not until this moment did he realize how completely he had dissociated himself from the "crowning glory."

It was always his mother—how she would look—how she would feel—how happy it would make her. It was to have been a glorious return for all her years of saving and sacrifice. "To see see you on the altar," was all she had asked, and now at the last moment this one consolation of her sad life was to be denied her.

"Oh, God—Master, not this," he rebelled in the first moment of his agony. Then he prayed as never before, until at length the grace of his ordination again possessed his soul with the "peace that surpasseth understanding."

Slowly and reverently he performed the sacred rites. Only once did the assistant priest remind him that he was delaying longer than the rubrics prescribed. It was at the moment when the Word became Flesh in his cradled fingers. Small wonder that he unduly paused, for to him it seemed that heaven and earth themselves stood still. Having completed the solemn sacrifice, he descended from the altar prepared to meet the trial in store for him.

natural results in similar circumstances." The young priest knelt in silent thanksgiving. He had made the sacrifice of the dearest thing he held on earth. Like Abraham, he had offered his beloved to his best Master, and his obedience had won the restoration of his obligation from a generous Lord.—Rev. G. Cross.

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THE INCOMPATIBLES

Certain Protestant ministers are clamoring for what they call a new "interpretation" of the Creed. They say that this is necessary in order to gain the sincere attachment to Christianity of many who are now indifferent to its message. There seems to be a rather widespread sympathy with their views. It is strange, however, that no one seems to have put this demand to a practical test. Is it true that the people wish to have religion rationalized? Do they really refuse to accept anything on the authority of the Church or the Bible? Do they reject the miraculous? The Modernist says that honesty demands that certain cherished beliefs must now be considered as pious myths. But is this the feeling of the people?

A retired clergyman of the Episcopal Church, the Rev. S. D. McConnell, who has been a Modernist all his life, tells us that he is bound to admit, even though the fact was at first very unwelcome to him, that people do not want Modernism at all. In his retirement he has had abundant opportunity to study the matter. He has made it a habit to attend all kinds of churches. He finds that there are three reasons why a Protestant goes to church. One goes because he thinks it right to attend public worship. But he takes part in it with mechanical indifference. He finds Protestant worship tedious. A second goes to hear sermons. But he can only hear a really good sermon in about one dozen churches in such a large city as New York. Elsewhere the preaching is a bore. A third goes for "Catholic" reasons. He is attracted by the "mystery" of worship. Unfortunately, the usual Episcopal service is not mysterious. A few ritualistic churches draw a crowd, elsewhere there is nothing to satisfy him. All these classes of churchgoers are more or less dissatisfied. The result is that very few Episcopalians attend church regularly. And this is not on account of a demand that they must believe in the Virgin Birth. Quite the contrary. It is because no provision is made to satisfy the human craving for a mystical union with God, which Dr. McConnell believes to be the fundamental motive for all worship.

On the other hand Dr. McConnell has not failed to compare the attendance at Catholic churches. He explains the crowded Masses by saying that Rome gives people what they need. People do not want truth; they want mystery. We trust that we are not doing him an injustice but this is what seems to be his meaning for he goes on to say that there are two incompatibles. The first is to offer a worship that satisfies the understanding, the other is to gratify an instinct which craves for union with God. The Episcopal Church is hesitating between these incompatibles. It seems as though she were drifting towards Sacramentalism; that is, she is becoming more "Catholic," and consequently less "rational."

But why call these two things incompatible? Has Dr. McConnell forgotten his philosophy? Why not satisfy both the understanding and the will? It is here that the heretic is always disclosed. It is always with him a choice of things where there need be no choice. Why cannot Divine worship be both rational and emotional? It is positively untrue to say that Catholics go to Mass merely because they obey an instinct. Indeed, this is easily disproved. The High Mass with its solemn appeal is never so popular as the Low Mass, even although the latter entails more sacrifice. Why do people prefer to get up early to assist at a plain Mass, rather than stay in bed longer to assist at one that is surrounded with more "mystery"? Dr. McConnell makes

the mistake of the casual observer who thinks that Catholics go to Mass to hear the singing or to watch the ceremonies. There could not be a greater mistake.

What Dr. McConnell and all the Modernists lack is faith. Modernism is really another word for loss of faith. It is quite true that man craves for a mystical union with God. But this union must be rational as well as emotional. It is ridiculous to confine an act of the reason to the acceptance of some truth which can be proved by experimental investigation. It is highly rational to believe things on authority. There are things that can only be known on authority and amongst these are things that have to do with God and religion. There can be no rational religion without faith. And there can be no faith without authority.

The Modernists with all their learning cannot tell us about heaven. They cannot tell us about the mysterious union of the soul with God. These things are beyond human investigation. They can only be known on authority. But this does not make it irrational to believe in them. We can only believe in them because we think that God has revealed them. It is only through the miraculous that they can possibly be revealed. Did we know them by human means they would cease to be matters of faith. How can we have a religion without faith? That is the childish thing that Modernists are trying to do. They are trying to build a tower of Babel by which they can look into heaven themselves without the help of God. The results will always be confusion.

It is rational to believe that God has spoken to us by the Fathers. It is rational to believe that He has spoken to us by His Son. It would be very irrational to think that He then abandoned us to the wisdom of human "Doctors of Theology." No. He promised that He would never leave us. He promised us the Holy Ghost to lead us into all truth. The Catholic Church is not, Dr. McConnell supposes, a shrewd human organization that catches the crowd. It is rather the answer to his enigma. It is the single organization that satisfies all the religious needs of men. Since the day of Pentecost there has been no need for the philosopher to envy the devotion of the worshippers at a pagan shrine where the head could not follow the heart. The greatest minds of all time have knelt with the Wise Men at the Crrib. What Dr. McConnell has found incompatible has long since been made compatible by the Catholic Church.—Catholic Standard and Times.

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