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SIMPLICITY AND COMPLEXITY IN RELIGION
J. D. Tibbitts in America

It has been frequently alleged as an argument against Catholic theology that by its approach to religion is made by far too difficult and too technical. Those who made this allegation are never tired of drawing a vivid contrast between what they conceive to be the extreme simplicity of the Gospel story and the highly developed system which characterizes the Church. As illustrating this disparity they urge that St. Paul with all his depth and skill in dialect would have found the "Summa" of St. Thomas quite beyond him, while St. Peter would not only have been incapable of producing the Encyclical "Pascendi," but would have been equally incapable of understanding it.

It is admitted, of course, that what these critics are pleased to call "scholastic Protestantism," fell into the same error. The Thirty-nine Articles, though there is an element about them not wholly unchildish, were certainly not addressed to children. The more logical Westminster Confession was yet far beyond the man in the street. And though the Oxford movement made so strong an appeal to primitive sources, it must needs make its prospective converts, to some extent at least, theologians, historians, antiquarians, mystics and aesthetes, before it can conduct them, with anything approaching adequacy, to the threshold of the Faith.

It is true that the New Theology has addressed itself to the problem of reducing Christianity to its lowest terms. It has succeeded only in reducing it to its lowest depths. It began by annihilating dogma, because dogma demanded explanation. It has ended by annihilating reason, because reason demanded dogma. So learned a man as the late Dr. James D. Martineau expended much labor and erudition in the attempt to show that early Christianity was a very simple affair. It is, however, by no means a simple affair to read Dr. Martineau's books, and there is always the feeling that the approach to so simple a thing, as he conceives it, should be just a little less complicated than he has apparently been able to make it.

Writers of this class, who aspire to become the efficiency experts of theology, appear to be quite forgetful of one important fact, and that is that the simplest and most evident propositions become complicated the moment they are made the objects of speculation. Thus, such fundamental truths as the existence of the material universe or the freedom of the will, are sometimes doubted or even denied by thinkers of certain schools. But they are doubted or denied as objects of speculation only. No one doubts them in real life. The determinist is as quick to appeal to the courts, and to employ the best counsel as other men. The idealist, despite his idealism, raises his umbrella when it rains. There is a manifest inconsistency between thought and action. Yet those men are the very first to ridicule scholastic philosophy because of its complication. That it is complex is obvious enough, but it is equally obvious that not only can I perform no rational act, but that it is impossible for me to engage in the simplest business transaction without assuming the fundamental truths upon which scholastic philosophy rests. In business, and at the same time a very poor philosopher. It is not at all necessary that I should be both, any more than it is necessary that I be a theologian in order to be a Christian. But to reject the notion of substances and causes because a whole literature has arisen to explain them, is as absurd as to reject grace and the Sacraments because they cannot be reduced to a formula.

It has been pointed out that Mr. Sunday's scheme of religion, though quite at variance with that of the new theologians, is, in this respect, far more successful; and that by him the intellectual process is at a very minimum. This may, in a way, be true, but it is to be remembered that those who surrender themselves to Mr. Sunday's eloquence, are carried over all possible stumbling-blocks on a wave of emotion; and emotion, whatever else it may be, is not speculative. And even when Mr. Sunday is drawn into conflict with opinions radically different from his own, his method seems to be to meet them with ridicule and with indignation. He hurls invectives at the higher critics and scorns at the evolutionists. To sit in judgment upon him is far from my thought; but it is of interest to note how impossible it is for him to isolate his faith from opinions which do have bearings upon it. It may please him better to dismiss them with a phrase of slang than with a scientific treatise; but his very method is proof of the problem which presses upon him,

and proof, too, that his faith is not quite so simple as he would have it seem. The truth is, that to reduce religion to a formula is to empty it of its content; and to empty it of its content is to destroy its vitality. A very great part of the value of religion lies in its power to affect individuals. To crystallize it into an abstract sentence such as "the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man," or "the life for others," is simply to limit its application to the taste. And although with some it might become an impelling power, it is perfectly evident that with none could it ever become a constraining power. It might make good men better. It has no means at its disposal for making bad men good.

But is it true that the complexity of the Catholic system is a stumbling block to those who are within her pale as well as to those who are rather threshold? Paradoxical as it may sound, the fact appears to be that it is because of this very complexity that she is possessed of a simplicity and directness which is found in no other religion. A striking illustration of this occurred many years ago in my own experience. A moral question presented itself to me in the course of a legal transaction. I was forced to act in one of two ways, and whichever way I might choose seemed to work injustice to some one. I naturally consulted a priest as to what my duty was. I received not only a direct reply, but the most convincing reasons for it, all of which were so very convincing as to make me wonder that it had not already occurred to me. From mere curiosity I propounded the same problems to a number of Protestant theological students, and to at least one Protestant minister. In nearly every instance the answer was wrong, and in every instance the reasoning. The contrast impressed me not a little. Here was the Catholic Church with her complicated system of dogma, reducing a concrete problem to the utmost simplicity, and there, on the other hand, were the disciples of the theological simplicity rendering the same problem more complicated than the whole Catholic system itself. And as with morals, so with all religious truth. To attempt to sum it up in however concise a sentence is to make its concrete application impossible; and as, after all, men are to be saved in the concrete, it is the concrete that counts.

Whatever, then, this school of theology may gain by its sweeping economy of intellectual effort, is more than offset by his wholesale sacrifice of the definite and the tangible. Its value lies chiefly in its unwitting demonstration that the advantage of knowing one's own mind is as true of religions as of individuals; and in its striking illustration of the fact that ambiguity is not necessarily synonymous with efficiency.

THE WESTERN FAIR

SEPTEMBER 7TH TO 15TH, 1917

The management of the Western Fair, London, Ontario, are adding \$2,000 to their Prize List this year. This amount has been carefully distributed throughout the list and will make it very attractive. The Exhibition has reached its fiftieth year and every effort is being put forth to make this the best ever held in London. This Exhibition has the reputation of being one of the best agricultural exhibitions in Canada, and this year will certainly be no exception to the rule. Live Stock Breeders and Exhibitors will do well to send their very best stock to London. A win there is sure to prove of very great benefit as there are always plenty of buyers. Prize Lists, entry forms and all other information on application to the Secretary, A. M. Hunt, London, Ontario.

CATHOLIC TRUTH SOCIETY NOTES

His Grace, Archbishop McNeil, in conformity with the promise which he made to the Society prior to the last annual meeting, has appointed Father L. O'Reilly to the Executive Committee to take charge of what is known as the Aquinas branch of the Society's work. The Aquinas Committee will consist of Father O'Reilly, and two other members of the executive, to be chosen by him, and their special duty will be to look after the welfare of converts and prospective converts, and the supplying of pamphlets, leaflets, etc., for use at non-Catholic missions. Father O'Reilly took his place on the executive board of the regular meeting on Wednesday, the 18th inst.

For the first time in many months, the receiving table for re-mailed Catholic newspapers and magazines in the Society's office, No. 67 Bond St., Toronto, is empty, and until such time as a supply is received from our good friends, the missionaries

will be without their weekly shipments, which have been sent regularly for some months past at the rate of about seventy-five pounds per week. French and Polish literature as well as English, are greatly in demand.

Messrs J. P. Hynes and J. F. Boland have been appointed to represent the Catholic Truth Society of Canada on the cooperative Council of Catholic Societies, which was formed recently for the particular purpose of looking after the welfare of Catholic soldiers and their dependents.

CARDINAL'S LETTER ON K. OF C. WORK

Cardinal Gibbons has addressed the following letter to the Knights of Columbus in reference to their endeavor to raise \$1,000,000 to build halls in various encampment centers.

"The timely and handsome patriotic gift of \$1,000,000 to build recreation halls for the soldiers at the sixteen cantonment camps deserves gratitude from half a million fathers and mothers, and from a hundred million loyal Americans.

"The Knights of Columbus do things, and it is my pleasant duty to both thank you and wish you the most hearty co-operation from not only your four hundred thousand Knights, but also from our eighteen million admiring American Catholics.

"Soon we shall have one hundred and sixty Catholic chaplains in the U. S. Armies, where over a third of the soldiers are said to be Catholics. And hence your noble gift of \$1,000,000 to furnish decent places for these splendid young American Catholic soldiers to hear Mass and receive the sacraments and other consolations of our holy faith, should forever stamp the Knights of Columbus as men of practical forethought, timely patriotism and true Christian charity.

"May God bless the Knights and this superb work!

"God wills it!"

CELTIC RHYME

It is claimed that rhyme originated in Ireland, and that its existence in literature is to be regarded as one of the assets of the graphic arts inherited from the early Celts. Dr. James Walsh says:

"This Celtic origin of rhyme was not surprising, since the world of music probably owes more to the Irish and to Ireland than to any other people or country. Altogether some 15,000 Irish melodies have been collected. . . . It was Mozart who once said that he would have given all the music he ever wrote to be the author of the Preface, in the Mass, which is merely a succession of single notes, but with a marvelous expression of majesty about them. And Handel envied, of all men, the author of the air known as Robin Adair, supposedly a Scotch melody, but which is really the old Eileen of Irish music."

OBSERVANCE OF SUNDAY

One of our exchanges recalls that in Granada, Spain, the members of the Third Order of St. Francis made a tacit agreement among themselves not to purchase anything in public on either Sundays or holidays. In consequence of which, we are told, the large Spanish city gradually saw a general observance of those days of the Lord. There is room for some such movement on this side of the Atlantic, too. For a large number of our faithful, the holidays of obligation have come to mean nothing more than attendance at Mass, and many do not scruple in excusing themselves even from this obligation on the plea of work. If any part of a community should be looked for support of the Sunday observance, it is obviously the Catholic element. And yet our Catholics are the very ones who frequently show the least regard not only for the civil restrictions, but for the ecclesiastical and divine regulations as well. "Remember to keep holy the Lord's day" seems to have been expurgated from some private editions of the decalogue. To hear Mass on holidays is of as great obligation, according to ecclesiastical precept; side by side with that law is the one enjoining fasting and abstinence; but since bodily inconvenience results, they are all similarly ignored.—Catholic Transcript.

EFFECT OF HOME TRAINING

A young Canadian soldier who fell in action sent a message to his mother, the night before the fatal engagement, that has been her solace ever since:

"Don't worry about me, mama," he wrote, "whatever happens, I am prepared. I've kept my promise to go to Mass whenever I could, and I went to confession and Communion two days ago. Your badge of the Sacred Heart reached me in the trenches last week, and I wear it all the time. Wasn't I glad to see it! You were always the best of mothers. Keep on praying for Frankie."

Here is convincing proof of the effect of Catholic home training. In his hour of peril the youth found his strength in the sources to which in childhood a good mother had taught him to turn.—Sacred Heart Review.

WANTED TEACHER FOR CATHOLIC
Separate school, Sec. No. 1, Morley. Salary \$500 per annum. Not less than a third class certificate will be accepted. Apply to John J. Hunt, Sec. Treas., at Rainy River District, Stratton, Ont. 2025-2

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DIED
McMULLEN.—At St. Agathe, on Friday, July 27th, 1917, Marguerite, beloved wife of James P. McMullen, and only daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. J. McCaffray. Funeral from the residence of her father, 196 James Street, Ottawa, on July 30th, to St. Patrick's Church and Notre Dame Cemetery. May her soul rest in peace.

TEACHERS WANTED
SECOND CLASS PROFESSIONAL TEACHER wanted for S. S. No. 4, Ennismore, Ontario. Salary paid for experience teacher. Duties to begin Sept. 3rd. Apply stating experience and salary to Rev. J. J. McGuire, Ennismore, Ont. 2025-3

TEACHER WANTED FOR S. S. NO. 10
Carleton Place. Duties to commence after holidays. One holding a 1st or 2nd class certificate. Apply stating salary and experience to Sec. Treas., Charles Scherf, Midway, Ont. R. R. 3. 2025-3

WANTED TEACHER WITH SECOND CLASS
Qualifications for S. S. No. 2, Townsend and Puslinch, County Wellington. Two miles south of O. A. C. Dundas road. Attendance small. Applications to close Aug. 14th. Apply to John Walsh, Sec. Treas., R. R. No. 2, Guelph, Ont. 2025-1

WANTED A TEACHER FOR C. S. S. NO. 2
Owen Sound. With at least a 2nd class certificate. Salary \$450 per annum. Duties to commence Sept. 3rd. Apply stating qualifications to Wm. Harry, R. R. No. 1, Manotick Station, Ont. 2025-2

TEACHER WANTED FOR SEPARATE
School Sept. 1st. Must have second class professional certificate. If experienced will pay \$625. Applicant must state age. Apply to R. E. Chener, Sec. 14 South Court, Fort Arthur, Ont. 2025-1

TEACHER WANTED FOR S. S. NO. 14
Adrian. Third class. Duties to commence Sept. 4. Apply to John O'Leary, Sec. Treas., R. R. No. 2, Loretto, Ont. 2024-2

TEACHER WANTED HOLDING A 2ND CLASS
certificate for separate school, No. 2, North Burgess. Duties to commence Sept. 1st, 1917. Apply stating salary, experience and qualifications to Martin Daily, Sec. Treas., Barry's Bay, Ont. 2024-3

WANTED 2ND CLASS PROFESSIONAL
Teacher for St. Augustine Separate school, County Huron. Duties to commence Sept. 3rd, 1917. Apply stating salary and experience to J. W. Boyle, Sec. Treas., Auburn, Ont., R. R. No. 2. 2024-3

WANTED TEACHER WITH EXPERIENCE
preferred, capable of teaching French and English, for S. S. No. 9, township of Dover, Ontario. Good location, modern school, five miles from nearest station and three fourth mile from church. Salary \$600. Duties to commence after summer holidays. State qualifications. Apply to Frank X. Emery, Sec. Treas., R. R. 2, Bear Line, Ont. 2022-4

CATHOLIC TEACHER WANTED FOR
S. S. No. 1, Rutherford; 1st or 2nd class professional certificate. Male or female. Duties to begin 1st Sept. next. Salary \$700 for first, or \$600 for 2nd class certificate. Apply to P. R. de Lamoignon, Killarney, Ont. 2022-1

TEACHER WANTED FOR CATHOLIC S. S.
No. 3, March, holding 2nd class certificate. Duties to commence 1st Sept. Apply stating salary to Ambrose Carroll, Sec. Treas., R. R. No. 2, Durobin, Ont. 2022-1

QUALIFIED CATHOLIC TEACHER WANTED
for S. S. No. 18, Peel, Township, Wellington Co. One holding a 2nd class professional certificate. Average attendance of school is 12. Apply stating salary and experience to John Conroy, Alma, Ont., R. R. No. 2. 2023-3

TEACHER WANTED FOR SCHOOL SECTION
S. S. No. 1, Cornwall; normal trained. Salary \$500 per annum. Duties to open Sept. 3rd. Apply to Hugh Cahoy, R. R. No. 2, Northfield Station, Ont. 2023-4

TEACHER WANTED FOR SEPARATE
school, No. 3, Dover, Kent county. Duties to commence Sept. 1st. Apply to D. D. Gagnon, Jr., Pain Court, Ont. 2023-3

TEACHERS WANTED HOLDING FIRST OR
second class Ontario Certificates for Catholic schools, Fort William, Ont. Salary \$500 per year. Duties to commence Sept. 1st. Apply to G. P. Smith, Sec. 1121 Simpson St., Fort William, Ont. 2022-1f

TEACHER WANTED FOR THE CATHOLIC
Separate school of Keewatin. Teacher must have at least a third class certificate for the province of Ontario, must be able to teach both French and English. Salary \$500 per year. Apply to Sec. Treas. Joseph Gagnon, Keewatin, Ont. 2021-6

NORMAL TRAINED TEACHER WANTED
for C. S. S. No. 4, Westmeath, (La Poudre). Duties to begin Sept. 3rd, 1917. One capable of teaching French and English. Apply stating salary and experience to W. C. Gervais, Sec. Treas., C. S. S. No. 4, Westmeath, La Poudre, Ont. 2021-1f

TWO TEACHERS WANTED FOR SEPARATE
school, No. 5, Bagot, Renfrew Co., holding 2nd class Normal certificate. Duties to commence Sept. 3rd, 1917. School beside the church and close to railway station. Apply stating salary and experience to J. L. Lertz, Cambridge, Ont. 2022-1f

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WANTED
HOUSEKEEPER FOR A PRIEST in one of the cities of the Detroit, Mich. diocese. Must furnish references as to character. Address: The Catholic Pastor, Belding, Mich. 2019-1f

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Separate school, Sec. No. 1, Morley. Salary \$500 per annum. Not less than a third class certificate will be accepted. Apply to John J. Hunt, Sec. Treas., at Rainy River District, Stratton, Ont. 2025-2

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