

Then she felt angry with her herself for being so ungrateful and ashamed at not being delighted at having such a beautiful image of her dear heavenly Mother. Of course, her parents had thought she would value it above all things; they must have made many sacrifices to buy it and spent many hours—her father carrying the basket and her mother embroidering the dainty linen cloth. Oh, she was wicked to be so grieved at not having received what she had hoped for! She must not let them see her sadness, she must not disappoint them of the pleasure they had expected to give her, and kneeling in her little bed she prayed earnestly for help to conquer her disappointment and appear properly overjoyed and grateful. It was the first time she was thus called upon to conquer her feelings and hide a sorrow with a smile and her struggle was a hard one, but with God's help she conquered nevertheless.

When about an hour later her mother peeped in with a beaming face to witness the delight of her little girl, she thought she had never seen Nancy so wildly happy over anything before.

"We knew you would love it above all things," said her mother, "and it was little Celia who chose it among many others, and her reason here so good that I wished you, dearest, to remember them always. She would have this one for you," she said, "because Our Lady smiled so lovingly and the dear Jesus held out His little arms as if He wished to hug you. And there are two lessons I wish this image of our dear Mother to teach you, my little girl. The first is to fight your disposition to sadness and discouragement and learn from Our Lady to smile all through your life; however many sorrows you may have to bear. God sends them all through love of you, and when your life is hard, my darling, even should your heart be breaking, remember then that the dear Jesus' arms are ever open and ready to press you to His Sacred Heart."

That was fifty years ago! The dear little baby sister had gone to join the angels but a short year afterward and the elder sister's heart had been well nigh broken at losing her. Later on her father had been killed in an accident and poverty had weighed heavily on mother and daughter, but they had borne it bravely, and when they had to part with the little home they had kept their one treasure, "Our Lady of the Smile," and had carried out the message of courage and cheerful resignation. Then when Nancy had been eighteen her loved mother had yielded her pure, generous soul to God, and the poor girl had felt that never before had she so needed to remember the perfect and unbounded sympathy of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Since then she had married and left the dear home country to follow her husband to America, where they had five beloved children. Of these, two had followed their father to the grave, one daughter had married and gone to live afar off and her eldest son had become a missionary priest. That had been at the same time one of the greatest sorrows and joys of her life—sorrow at parting from him, and joy at the thought that she had been able to offer so great a gift to God and to raise a son worthy of the priesthood. She had still one child left, her youngest son, a bright, clever, promising lad, and she had gone through the greatest privations and almost worked her fingers to the bone in order to procure for him the very best education. Now he was away in a far city fighting to make his way and acquire a good position, and it was months since she had heard from him. She had made up all sorts of excuses for his silence, and through all her sorrows had bravely struggled to keep cheerful as well as resigned and be worthy of the name her children had given her, "our smiling mother." But yesterday she had heard from a neighbor that her son had obtained a fine position in a bank and that he was now "quite a gentleman."

"Queer he hasn't let you know, ain't it?" continued her informant a sour-faced woman who scoffed at all religious ideas and therefore took a very bitter, despondent view of life. "Children are the most ungrateful creature alive, and now that your lad's made a position for himself, seems he's ashamed of his hard working old mother."

"Oh, I'm sure that isn't it," answered Mrs. Daly quickly. "My boy isn't that sort, but he always was a fearful bad correspondent," she added with a smile as she quickly walked away.

When she was all alone in her dingy little room, however, she had fallen on her knees and cried as she had never cried before, even on the graves of her loved ones, for the thought that her neighbor had so brutally expressed had come to her also and stabbed her to the heart, with a sorrow keener than any of the others had been. There are so many things that are sadder and harder to bear in this life than the holy death of those we love! Then she reproached herself for harboring such a thought, and brushed away her tears and forced the smile on her lips as she told herself that her boy was most likely waiting to send her the happy news on the next day, her birthday. Yes, that was it evidently, and all that evening she had longed for the morning and for the loving letters she would surely receive, not only from him, but from her two other children.

As soon as it was dawn the next morning she had hurried to Mass and Holy Communion. On her way home

she had stopped to make a few purchases, among others a little bunch of white flowers and some greenery with which to decorate her beloved statue. To be sure, she had to pay for these out of the few pennies that were to supply the meals of the day, but she said with a smile as she lovingly decked her tiny altar:

"It's only right you should have some flowers on your golden jubilee, dear Mother, and it won't be the first time I've gone short of food. The letters from my dear children will be better than meat and drink to me today."

And she had sat down to her sewing and endeavored to wait patiently for the postman's welcome whistle, but alas! he had come twice to her neighbors and passed her door without ever stopping to bring her a word from either of her loved ones. She had tried so hard to bear it bravely, to be resigned, but oh, the aching in her lonely old heart at being thus forgotten! Through all her years of sorrow and anxiety she had never felt so utterly lonely and forsaken. Poor, old, far from the land of her birth, neglected even by the children she had so loved and slaved for, she seemed to have nothing left but her memories and—ah, yes, God and Our Lady, she had them still. They loved her still, and remembering her dear mother's words she sank upon her knees exclaiming: "O my loving Jesus! let me lean against Thy loving breast and find strength in Thy love, for surely my lonely heart is breaking at last!"

Just then there was the sound of buoyant footsteps springing up the dark staircase and a minute later the door was flung open and the sorrowing mother found herself clasped in her son's arms.

"What was my smiling mother in tears?" he exclaimed as he held her loved face between his hands and kissed her tenderly.

"They are tears of happiness and relief at seeing you again, my dear boy," she answered with a radiant smile.

"Ah! but had there been no others before? Now, confess, little mother." Then, as she hesitated, he added: "I'm afraid you must have felt badly at not receiving letters from any of us this morning. Hadn't you heard that there had been a washout on the line? All the trains were delayed eight hours or more, else I should have been here to surprise you and welcome you home from Mass this morning, as I had meant to do, dearest. And I kept my good news for a birthday surprise for you, that's why I didn't write before. I wanted to wait until I had everything ready for you. Now, do you want to know my secret, you dear mother? After making a novena to Our Lady, I obtained a fine position as cashier in the First National Bank and have rented a dear little bungalow and furnished it and got everything ready. There are only two things lacking complete my delightful little home, and I hope to take them there to-morrow, my own dear mother and 'Our Lady of the Smile.' Why, mother dear, you are crying again. I thought you would be so happy."

"Happy! Oh, I'm so happy that my heart is like to burst with loving gratitude to our dear Lord; but I'm sorry that I ever doubted, ever mistrusted, ever forgot to smile."

"It must have been a very short and unwilling doubt and forget. I know, mother," he said tenderly, "and I'm afraid it was all my fault for having neglected you in the matter of news. I was always waiting to have the good news to give you and then when I got my berth, the days seemed to fly by without my having a minute, and I wanted to surprise you with it all this morning. Now, please God, there'll never be any more hard work or loneliness and anxiety for you again, dearest. But what is that knocking at the door. Ah! it's the postman, and see, mother, quite a budget of letters from Sally and the little ones, and a fine fat one from brother—I mean Father," he added smiling, "and ever so many little boxes—they look like presents. Which shall be opened first, dear?"

"Before we open any of them, let us kneel down together before Our Lady of the Smile, my own boy. She and her dear Son are those I want to thank first, and I can never thank them enough for once more they have given me a birthday gift which is a thousand times more precious to me than any I ever could have dreamt of asking for."—Henriette Eugenie Delamare, in the Messenger of the Sacred Heart.

THE MONTH OF MAY

"The month of May is dedicated in an especial manner to the Blessed Virgin. There is something very beautiful in the Church's choice of this month for that purpose, for May is perhaps the most charming of months. While it does not show us the fulness of Nature's beauties, it gives us their beginnings and the promise of fruition. Winter's grasp has been loosened and all Nature begins to rejoice. It is all very beautiful, this new-coming to life of the things about us, and it is singularly fitting that May with its beginnings of life should be dedicated to the honor of her who bore Life itself.

The sin of our first parents was the cause and at the same time the commencement of a long winter for the human race—a Winter that had but one thing to relieve its gloom—the promise of a glorious Spring. That promise kept generation after generation from despair, gave them the hope that though sin had chilled all

things, the Sun of Mercy would make them glow again in newness of life. After ages had passed the time was at hand for the fulfillment of God's promise. The Angel Gabriel came from heaven a messenger to a virgin in Judea. "Hail, full of grace!" That was the beginning of the Springtime for the fallen race. Those words, marked the end of the long, severe winter which sin had brought upon the world. When that angelic message was delivered to Mary the whole human race could say, in the words of the Canticle: "Winter is now past; the rain is over and gone:—The flowers have appeared in our land. The time of pruning is come. The voice of the dove is heard in our land. The fig tree hath put forth her green figs; the vines in flower yield their sweet smell."

The Winter of sin was passed when the angel announced to Mary that she was to be the Mother of the Redeemer. The flower of Mercy was just budding, bringing to the children of Adam the promise of the divine odor of grace and pardon.

Thus in our own day when once again Nature is in blossom, it is fitting that the Church should honor her in Maytime who was "the flower of the field and the lily of the valley," and that we should honor her of whom it is said: "They are all fair and there is no stain in thee."

With flower and song the Catholic heart expresses over all the world its love for Mary during these days of budding beauty. But the particular devotion which Catholics bear the Mother of God during this month is far from being merely a sentimental garlanding of flowers; it is rather a Springtime expression of the deep and solid love and reverence which always characterize the Catholic's mental and emotional attitude to the Mother of God, for next after Christ Himself they honor and love His Blessed Mother.—Providence Visitor.


THE MISSING LINK, RELIGION AND MORALITY

Time was when simple folk paid little heed to the problems of science. That time has passed. The newspapers and cheap novels have thrust these problems upon the notice of all. They occupy the thoughts of professors and mechanics alike. They form topics of conversations for working girls and idle ladies. To-day scarcely anyone is ignorant of the fact that problems cluster round the missing link. Timid souls are frightened by them. They fear that if a link is found religion and morality will be doomed to extinction. That religion and morality will suffer detriment no one doubts. Wicked men grasp at any reason, however absurd, for further wickedness. That they should suffer detriment is an all but patent absurdity. The missing link, what will it be? It will be a skeleton of a creature intermediate between ape and man. What follows from this? Not one jot or tittle against religion and morals. They will remain as they are now, unscathed, untouched. Even a cursory examination of facts will convince reasonable men of this. Giving a missing link, scientists will conclude that man's body has been evolved from a lower form. Be it so. God will neither be annihilated nor minimized thereby. He will still remain God, Lord, Creator. Man will still be a mere creature, subject to the Creator. The afore-said evolution would rather heighten than diminish the dignity of God, if that were at all possible. It presupposes a long progression from lower forms to a higher form, in accordance with set laws which must work through ages with the utmost precision in order that a predetermined end may be achieved. Such a process postulates a supremely intelligent Founder of law, Promulgator of law, Guardian of law, God, infinite in undiminished power, unblemished sanctity. Thus the ultimate source of religion and morals themselves remain, must remain. More-over man's body is not man. He has an immortal soul, a simple, spiritual substance which informs the body and makes it what it is, the body of a rational creature. This soul or spirit is not the outcome of an evolutionary process. It was created directly, immediately by God. Between it and the soul of the brute there is an unbridged, impassable gulf. No process of evolution can fill the chasm. All the powers of nature stand helpless on its brink. The human soul is but a little lower than the angels. The most perfect brute-soul is little higher than the animating principle of the glow-worm. The former is simple, spiritual, capable of an existence independent of matter. The latter is extended, material, dependent upon matter for its continuance in existence. Under such circumstances it is clear that the former cannot be produced by an upgrowth of the latter. Essential differences cannot be smoothed away by a series of accidental modifications. Neither can the brute leap into the estate of man by a sudden essential change. The dog cannot fall asleep a dog and awake a man. By no conceivable process can such an occurrence take place. This is not a conclusion of reason alone. Strange to say, it was supported by no less an authority than Virchow, who was neither ignorant of science nor biased in favor of theology. The soul, therefore, is directly and immediately due to a creative act. God is surely master here. Man is just as surely a crea-

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ture. Now religion and morals are primarily a matter of the soul. With one slight reservation which does not pertain to our thesis, they concern the body through the soul and by reason of the soul. The conclusion is obvious. It calls for no labor but only for this statement, that the direct and immediate creation of the soul is the second reason why religion and morals would remain undisturbed in the face of one or one thousand missing links. At this juncture a piping voice cries, "Fraud!" The materialist is alert to accuse us of deception. Here is his difficulty. The Bible is the source of faith. The Bible teaches that man's body was directly and immediately produced by God from the slime of the earth. The discovery of the missing link would falsify this. Thus the source of faith would not only be discredited but ruined. Religion should and would disappear. This reasoning is much too swift to be accurate. In the first place the Bible as interpreted by the properly constituted authority, the Catholic Church, is one but not the only source of faith. This problem does not, however, fall within our present scope. We pass it over for the second and more pertinent difficulty. Does the Bible teach the direct and immediate production of man's body from the slime of the earth? Has the Catholic Church ever made such a doctrine an article of faith? A direct, frank answer is in order. Here it is: The doctrine of the direct and immediate production of Adam's body by God is of common, universal acceptance in the Church. Catholic theologians unanimously teach it, but, with few exceptions, they do not pronounce it part of the deposit of faith. No Pope, no Council has ever defined it. The words of Genesis, "and the Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth," imply, so it would seem, direct and immediate production; but of themselves they are neither so precise nor so definite as to exclude another interpretation. However, the Biblical Commission in a decree dated June 30, 1909, has declared that the literal, historical sense of the words which relate to the special creation of man cannot be called in question. Though this decision does not demand the absolute, irremediable assent due to an infallible pronouncement, yet its authority is such that without a great change in the evidence which led to it, the decision cannot be contravened lawfully by Catholics.

From all this it follows that should one believe in the production of the human body from lower forms by either a gradually progressive or saltatory process of evolution he would not out himself off from the Church by unfaith. Nevertheless, in view of the attitude of the theologians towards the problem, the decision of the Biblical Commission and the entirely unsatisfactory nature of the evidence for such an evolution, the Catholic who should believe in it would place himself in a position entirely dangerous to his faith. For the rest, in due time the Church will do justice to this problem in her usual calm, critical manner. She is the divine custodian of God's truth. The gates of hell shall not prevail against her. Satan shall not sift her leader who through the mercy and wisdom of God is infallible as the official teacher of faith and morals.

If, as time goes on, that leader passes an official judgment on the Scriptural question in dispute, Catholics can be sure of two things. Firstly, that consideration was given to all the evidence; secondly, that the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Light and Truth, guarded their teacher from error. "Timid souls, hush your complaints, cease your anxieties. Were missing links posed as high as Etna on every plain, religion and morality would be as they are now, a consolation to the godly, a "shwart and disnatured torment" to the ungodly.—R. H. Tierney, S. J. in America.

GOOD EXAMPLE NEEDED

In a pastoral letter dealing with the sins of modern society, Bishop Van de Ven of Alexandria, N. Y., says: "We appeal to all clean-minded people to take a firm stand against all these outrages on public decency, to shun them, to ostracize them, and to close their doors against them. If all the good men and women in a community would take a united stand, what a marvelous purifying of the moral atmosphere would be the result!

"If especially our women of the better class, instead of being the slaves of a vulgar and ugly fashion, would set an example of independence and of good taste, many others

would be sure to follow, and many a poor, weak minded girl might be saved from ruin. In several countries, the ladies of the best social standing have thus banded together to offset every form of public indecency and immodesty, and to uphold the rules of propriety and Christian morality in social life. Let our Catholics do likewise. Let all the members of our ladies' sodalities and societies be pledged to modesty in dress and to the careful shunning of all improper amusements."—True Voice.

ON A FALSE SCENT

A cable dispatch states that the Very Rev. Henry Wace, a dean of Canterbury, is much alarmed about the future of the Church of England. He has raised the cry that it is in danger from "Romanizing tendencies." In addressing the Convocation of Westminster the other day, he said that body of Anglican ecclesiastics that "the present is the most critical period in the history of the Church of England since the Reformation." In giving his reasons for entertaining this opinion he said that there is a powerful body among the Anglican clergy actively at work trying "to bring the ceremonial and doctrines of the English Church in harmony with those of the Church of Rome."

It was suggested by the Dean that Parliament should be called upon to intervene to prevent the Anglican clergymen he had in mind from introducing into the Church of England the invocation of saints and devotional practices in honor of the Blessed Virgin.

It would be a spectacle for men and angels, if the British Parliament should act on the suggestion made by the Dean of Canterbury. A series of Parliamentary resolutions and resolves, enjoining upon the members of the established Church what to do and what not to do, would bring home to Anglicans the subservience of their Church to the State and cause hosts of them to withdraw allegiance to a religious organization which would undertake to accomplish by the aid of Parliament what it should be able to do by its own spiritual authority. And yet Dean Wace told the Convocation of Westminster that if some such course were not adopted there would be "civil war within the Church which would entail its National ruin."

The Anglican clergymen against whom the Dean of Canterbury fulminates, are doing something toward spiritualizing the Church of England. They are not undermining Christianity as are many of the Anglican clergymen who are engaged in spreading the teachings of the higher criticism. That is the real peril the Church of England has to face. As for the good souls among its members who are practicing Catholic devotion, whilst refusing to recognize the spiritual supremacy of the successor of Peter, they are deceiving themselves, if they believe they are Catholics. They however, are doing their part in keeping the spiritual element in the Church of England from being obliterated by Anglican champions of the higher criticism.—N. Y. Freeman's Journal.

PITIFABLE PLIGHT

Bishop Vaughan of England, remarking that the Anglican Church stands in a most pitiable plight" notes some facts in illustration: "Within the one small Church of this one nation are found men who believe in the necessity of baptism for salvation, and men who do not believe in its necessity; men who believe and men who disbelieve in sacramental absolution; men who believe and disbelieve in the real true objective Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist. Further; we find some who accept and others who refuse to accept the virgin-birth of our Divine Lord; some who teach His resurrection, and some who teach the opposite."

And yet they all claim to be of one religion, which position, or any other, they can maintain on the principle of private judgment.—N. Y. Freeman's Journal.

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