
Who Lose The Faith?

Class 1. They lose the Faith who find it a rebuke to their morals. Humorously, sometimes, the remark is made: If your education interferes with your fun, cut out your education. Granted that these words are but the sputterings of a glib tongue, carried out into actual living their effect must be tragic. The parallel: If your Faith interferes with your morals, cut out your Faith. Would that this were mere theory! A faithless rounder carried in his wallet the clipped item of a priest gone wrong: sop for his conscience, -- others like himself. Not so hard on the sentiment of self-esteem. That kind of rot is rationalizing, not reasoning. It proves nothing. Patently there have been bad priests: Judas, Arius, Luther. Confessionals are mute evidence that Christ, the founder, saw, sadly, the failures along with the successes.

Class 2. They lose the Faith who do not pray. Association is the stuff of which friendships are made. "If I knew him I could not hate him." Precisely, and if you knew him, perhaps much good in him you would find, and even friendship. Friendship itself without association is likely to grow very thin. The parallel: The opportunities for association with God are prayer and the Sacraments. Take them out of a human life and God can become less than a dim memory. He just doesn't figure in such a life. Ideals are lost, sin is rationalized, the wish is father to the thought. Dogmas as the supreme motives of life, the dynamos which help to translate ethical ideals into heroic actualities, pass out of the picture. There is no dependence upon God, no humility. It is prayer which exercises these. "Ask, and it shall be given you" (Matt. vii, 7). But they will not ask. "Watch ye: and pray that ye enter not into temptation" (Matt. xxiv, 41). But they will not watch. Sin enters. The mind is darkened. The taste for the spiritual grows less. Perhaps there is a whirl of excitement, "the sacrament of oblivion", the world's Sacrament of Penance. God becomes like that pal of yesteryear. Hasn't been seen for a long time. Not written to, not even a Christmas card. Not thought about much. Yes, God has gone out of the picture!

Class 3. They lose the Faith who are set-ups for the Agnostic and the Sceptic. Cocky and naturally keen, they are knocked down by clandestine reading: like number-one pin on the alley. The parallel: There was a young man who had won high academic distinction. He used to be a Catholic. He was a Catholic when he finished high school. He hadn't been to a Catholic high school. At twelve he stopped growing as a Catholic. He went to manhood every way but religiously. His religious mental equipment was that of the twelve-year-old. That kind of equipment was no match for the mature agnostic, the clever sophist, the doubt-scattering sceptic. He did not know the common-sense philosophy of the Schoolmen, the critically examined evidence for the reasonable credibility of the Faith. He did not know that when Agnosticism (the position of the learned ignoramus), Pietism, Pragmatism (the substitutions of the heart for the head) occupied the stage in the nineteenth century, the old Church at the Vatican Council had to enter the lists to defend the rights of reason. He was not impressed by evidence that he had not seen, or, if seen, had not carefully analyzed. Here reading does not guarantee vital assimilation. He knew the sophisms, he had heard the doubts raised. The toxins of unbelief were in his system, but the antibodies of a system of Catholic thinking were not there. It was a field day for the toxins. The method of St. Thomas Aquinas should be that of a young man's religious education. True, after stating with clearness, startling to the modern, just what the question is, the greatest of the Schoolmen poses the current objections, but then he establishes his thesis, and, finally, in and by the light of the established thesis he discloses the half-truth and the half-error of the fallacy. Our young man had the objections; he did not have the thesis. He is a long way off. He has plenty of chance to investigate. Let's hope he is smart enough to see it. But sad to say, he was bowled over in -- of all places! -- the sceptic's alley -- this man grown every way but religiously.

PRAYERS: Deceased - relatives of Bro. Paul, C.S.C., and Prof. Tunney; a friend of John Wallace. Ill - the sister of a priest. Three special intentions.