

doubt; nor is it doubting to consider the arguments urged against it, when there is good reason for doing so; but I am speaking of a real doubt, or a wanton entertainment of objections. Such a procedure the Church denounces, and not only for the reasons which I have assigned, but because it would be a plain abandonment of her office and character to act otherwise. How can she, who has the prerogative of infallibility, allow her children to doubt of her gift? It would be a simple inconsistency in her, who is the sure oracle of truth and messenger of heaven, to admit of rebels to her authority. She simply does what the Apostles did before her, whom she has succeeded. "He that despiseth," says St. Paul, "despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given in us His Holy Spirit." And St. John, "We are of God; he that knoweth God, heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth us not; by this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error." There is a remarkable instance in the Old Testament also, which teaches us at once the incongruity of doubt in those who make a religious profession, and the conduct of the Church in regard to them. When Elias was taken up into heaven, Eliseus was the only witness of the miracle; when then he came back to the sons of the Prophets, they doubted what had become of Elias, and wished to search for him; and, though they acknowledged Eliseus as his successor, they in this instance refused to take his word. He had struck the waters of Jordan, they had divided, and he had passed over; here surely was ground enough for faith and accordingly "the sons of the prophets at Jericho, who were ever against him, seeing it, said, The spirit of Elias hath rested upon Eliseus; and they came to meet him, and worshipped him, falling to the ground." What could they require more? they confessed that Eliseus had the spirit of his great master, and, in confessing it, implied that that master was taken away: yet they proceed, from infirmity of mind, to make a request indicative of doubt; "Behold, there are with thy servants fifty strong men, that can go and search for thy master, lest perhaps the Spirit of the Lord hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain or in some valley." Now here was a request to follow up a doubt into an inquiry; did Eliseus allow it? he knew perfectly well, that the inquiry would but end, as it really ended, in confirmation of the truth, but it was indulging a wrong spirit to engage in it, and he would not allow it. These religious men were, as he would feel, strangely inconsistent; they were doubting his word whom they had just now worshipped as a Prophet, and, not only so, but they were doubting his supreme authority, for they implied that Elias was still among them. Accordingly he forbade their request; "He said, Send not." This is what the world would call stifling an inquiry; it was forsooth, tyrannical and oppressive to oblige them to take on his word what they might ascertain for themselves; yet he could not do otherwise without being unfaithful to his divine mission, and sanctioning them in a sin. It is true, when "they pressed him, he consented, and said, Send;" but we must not suppose this to be more than a concession in displeasure, like that which Almighty God gave to Balaam, who pressed his request in a similar way. When Balaam asked to go with the ancients of Moab, God said, "Thou shalt not go with them;" when Balaam asked Him "once more," God said to him, "Arise, and go with them;" then it is added, "Balaam went with them, and God was angry." Here in like manner, the prophet said, Send; "and they sent fifty men, and they sought three days, but found him not;" yet, though the inquiry did but prove that Elias was removed, Eliseus did not recognize it, even when it was concluded; "and he said to them, Said I not to you, Send not?" It is thus that the Church ever forbids inquiry in those who already acknowledge her authority; but, if they will inquire, she cannot hinder it; but they sin in doing so.

And now I think you see, my brethren, why inquiry precedes faith, and does not follow it. You inquired before you joined the Church; you were satisfied, and God rewarded you with the grace of faith; were you now determined to inquire further you would lead us to think you had lost it again, for inquiry and faith are in their very nature incompatible. I will add, what is very evident, that no body or person has a right to your faith, and a right to forbid further inquiry, but the Catholic Church; and for this single reason, that no other body even claims to be infallible, let alone the proof of such a claim. Here is the defect at first starting, which disqualifies them, one and all, from ever competing with the Church of God. The religions about us, so far from demanding your faith, actually call on you to inquire and to doubt freely about themselves; they protest that they are but voluntary associations, and would be sorry to be taken for anything else; they beg and pray you not to mistake their preachers for anything more than mere sinful men, and they invite you to take the Bible with you to their sermons, and to judge for yourselves whether their doctrine is in accordance with it. Then, as to the Established Religion, grant that there are those in it who forbid inquiry; yet dare they maintain that Church, as they speak, is infallible? if not, and no one does, how can they forbid inquiry, or claim for it the faith of any of its members? Faith under these circumstances is not really faith, but obstinacy. Nor do they commonly venture to demand it; they will say, negatively, "Do not inquire;" but they cannot say positively, "Have faith;" for in whom are their members to have faith? of whom can they say, individual or collection of men, "He or they are gifted with infallibility, and cannot mislead us?" Therefore, when pressed to explain themselves, they ground their duty of continuance in their communion, not on faith in it, but on attachment to it, which is a very different thing; utterly different, for there are very many reasons why they should feel a very great liking for the religion in which they have been brought up. Its portions of Catholic teaching, its established

forms, the pure and beautiful English of its prayers, its literature, the piety found among its members, the influence of superiors and friends, its historical associations, its domestic character, the charm of a country life, the remembrance of past years,—there is all this and much more to attach the mind to the national worship. But attachment is not trust; nor is to obey the same as to look up to, and to rely upon; nor do I think that any thoughtful and educated man can simply believe or confide in its word. I never met any such person who did, or said he did, and I do not think that such a person is possible. Its defenders would believe if they could; but their highest confidence is qualified by a misgiving. They obey, they are silent before the voice of their superiors, they do not profess to believe. Nothing is clearer than this, that, if faith in God's word is necessary for salvation, the Catholic Church is the only medium of exercising it.

And now, my brethren, who are not Catholics, perhaps you will tell me, that, if all doubt is to cease when you become Catholics, you ought to be very sure that the Church is from God before you join it. You speak truly; no one should enter the Church without a firm purpose of taking her word in all matters of doctrine and morals, and that, on the ground of her coming directly from the God of Truth. You must look the matter in the face, and count the cost. If you do not come in this spirit, you may as well not come at all; high and low, learned and ignorant, must come to learn. If you are right as far as this, you cannot go very wrong; you have the foundation; but, if you come in any other temper, you had better wait till you are otherwise minded. You must come, I say, to the Church to learn; you must come not to bring your own notions to her, but with the intention of ever being a learner; you must come with the intention of making her your portion and of never leaving her. Do not come as an experiment; do not come as you would take sittings in a chapel, or tickets for a lecture-room; come to her as to your home, to the school of your soul, to the Mother of Saints, and to the vestibule of heaven. On the other hand do not distress yourselves with thoughts whether your faith will last, when you have joined her; this is a suggestion of your Enemy to hold you back. He who has begun a good work in you, will perfect it; He who has chosen you, will be faithful to you; put your cause in His hand, wait upon Him, and you will surely persevere. What good work will you ever begin, if you bargain first to see the end of it? If you wish to do all at once, you will do nothing; he has done half the work, who has begun it well; you will not gain your Lord's praise at the final reckoning by hiding His talent. No; when He brings you from error to truth, He will have done the more difficult work, (if aught is difficult to Him,) and surely He will preserve you from returning from truth to error. Take the experience of those who have gone before you in the same course; they had many fears that their faith would fail them, before taking the great step, but those fears vanished on their taking it; they had fears, before the grace of faith, lest, after receiving it, they should lose it again; none, (except on the ground of their general frailness,) after it was actually given.

Be convinced in your reason that the Catholic Church is a teacher sent to you from God, and it is enough. I do not wish you to join her, till you are. If you are half convinced, pray for a full conviction, and wait till you have it. It is better indeed to come quickly, but better slowly than carelessly; and sometimes, as the proverb goes, the more haste, the worse speed. Only be sure that the delay is not from any fault of yours, which you can remedy. God deals with us very differently; conviction comes slowly to some, quickly to others; in some it is the result of much thought and many arguments, in others it comes promptly and decisively. One man is convinced at once, as in the instance described by St. Paul: "If all prophesy," he says, speaking of exposition of doctrine, "and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all. The secrets of his heart are made manifest; and so falling down on his face, he will worship God, and say that God is among you of a truth." The case is the same now; some men are converted merely by entering a Catholic Church; others are converted by reading one book; others by one doctrine. They feel the weight of their sins, and they see that that religion must come from God, which alone has the means of forgiving them. Or they are touched and overcome by the evident sanctity, beauty, and (as I may say) fragrance of the Catholic Religion. Or they long for a guide amid the strife of tongues; and the very doctrine of the Church about faith, which is so hard to many, is conviction to them. Others, again, hear many objections to the Church, and follow out the whole subject far and wide; conviction can scarcely come to them except as at the end of a long inquiry. As in a court of justice, one man's innocence may be proved at once, another's is the result of a careful investigation; one has nothing in his conduct or character to explain, another has many presumptions against him at first sight: so Holy Church presents herself very differently to different minds who are contemplating her from without. God deals with them differently, but, if they are faithful to their light, at last, in their own time, though it may be a different time to each, He brings them to that one and the same state of mind, very definite and not to be mistaken, we call conviction. They will have no doubt, whatever difficulties shall attach to the truth, that the Church is from God; they may not be able to answer this objection or that, but they will be certain in spite of them.

This is a point which should ever be kept in view: conviction is a state of mind, and it is something beyond and distinct from the mere arguments of which it is the result; it does not vary with their strength or their numbers. Arguments lead to a conclusion,

and when the arguments are stronger, the conclusion is clearer; but conviction may be felt as strongly in consequence of a clear conclusion as of one which is clearer. A man may be so sure upon six reasons, that he does not need a seventh, nor would feel surer if he had it. And so as regards the Catholic Church: men are convinced in very various ways, what convinces one, does not convince another; but this is an accident; the time comes any how, sooner or later, when a man ought to be convinced, and is convinced, and then he is bound not to wait for any more arguments, though they are producible. He will be in a condition to refuse more arguments, and will perhaps own that he has heard enough; he does not wish to read or think more, his mind is quite made up. Then it is his duty to join the Church at once; he must not delay; let him be cautious in counsel, but prompt in execution. This it is that makes Catholics so anxious about him: it is not that they wish him to be precipitate; but, knowing the temptations which the evil one ever throws in our way, they are lovingly anxious for his soul, lest he has come to the point of conviction, and is passing it, and is losing his chance of conversion. If so, it may never return; God has not chosen every one to salvation: it is a rare gift to be a Catholic; it may be offered us once in our lives and never again; and, if we have not seized on the "accepted time," nor known "in our day the things which belong unto our peace," O the misery for us! What shall we be able to say, when death comes, and we are not converted, and it is directly and immediately our own doing that we are not?

"Wisdom crieth abroad, she lifteth up her voice in the streets; How long, ye little ones, love ye childishness? and fools desire what is harmful to them, and the unwise hate knowledge? Turn ye at My reproof; behold, I will bring forth to you My Spirit, and I will show My words unto you. Because I have called, and ye refused, I stretched out My hand, and there was none who regarded, and ye despised all My counsel and neglected My chidings; I also will laugh in your destruction, and will mock when your fear cometh; when a sudden storm shall rush on you, and destruction shall thicken as a tempest, when tribulation and straitness shall come upon you. Then shall they call on Me, and I will not hear; they shall rise betimes, but they shall not find Me; for that they hated discipline, and took not on them the fear of the Lord, nor acquiesced in My counsel, but made light of My reproof, therefore shall they eat the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices."

O the misery for us, as many of us as are in that number! O the awful thought for all eternity, O the remorseful sting, "I was called, I might have answered, and I did not." And O the blessedness, if we can look back on the time of trial, when friends implored and enemies scoffed, and say,—The misery for me, not now, but which would have been, had I not followed on, had I hung back, when Christ called! O the utter confusion of mind, the wreck of faith and opinion, the blackness and void, the dreary scepticism, the hopelessness, which would have been my lot, the pledge of the outer darkness to come, had I been afraid to follow Him! I have lost friends, I have lost the world, but I have gained Him, who gives in Himself houses and brethren and sisters and mothers and children and lands a hundred fold; I have lost the perishable, and gained the Infinite; I have lost time, and I have gained eternity; "O Lord, my God, I am Thy servant and the son of Thine handmaid; Thou hast broken my bonds. I will sacrifice to Thee the sacrifice of praise, and I will call on the Name of the Lord."

CATHOLIC INTELLIGENCE.

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND.

(From the Tablet.)

We rejoice to be enabled to lay before our readers the following important official document, announcing that the initiative steps have been taken for founding the Catholic University. Certainly, the Catholics of Ireland owe a great debt of gratitude to their illustrious Prelates for the promptness and zeal with which they are consulting for the holy education of the youth of this country for the present and future generations. As will be perceived, a committee and secretaries have been appointed; meetings of committee arranged to be held; an address forthcoming to the Catholics of Ireland; regular monthly collections appointed to be made; and an account opened in the Hibernian Bank, in the name of the four Archbishops, where the Faithful may lodge donations towards this great and holy design. Thus we see that the foundations are being laid of a great national institution, whence, by the blessings of Almighty God, for centuries to come, the light of Catholic Faith and sound learning will emanate, not for Ireland only, but for the general good of Catholicity in America and the world at large:—

PERMANENT COMMITTEE FOR ESTABLISHING A CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY IN IRELAND.

The following Archbishops and Bishops, two from each of the four provinces, were appointed by the Synod of Thurles as a permanent Committee for carrying into execution the important project of establishing a Catholic University in Ireland, with power to name as members of the Committee one Clergyman and one layman each:—

The Most Rev. Dr. Cullen,
The Most Rev. Dr. Murray,
The Most Rev. Dr. Slattery,
The Most Rev. Dr. McHale,
The Right Rev. Dr. Cantwell,
The Right Rev. Dr. Haly,
The Right Rev. Dr. Foran,
The Right Rev. Dr. Derry.

The Rev. Patrick Leahy, President of the College

of Thurles, was appointed Secretary to the Committee.

LONDON, Oct. 9.—Letters were received yesterday from Dr. Wiseman, announcing his elevation to the dignity of Cardinal and Archbishop of Westminster, at the Consistory held on the 30th ult. You will thus see that the Hierarchy is definitely established, and the several Vicars-Apostolic are, by the Papal Brief, translated to their respective Sees.—Cardinal Wiseman declares his intention of returning home in the course of a few weeks, and is expected here by the middle of November. It is impossible to calculate the effects of this most important measure; but the sudden way in which, at last, it has been brought about, gives it an additional interest.—The Vicar-General has issued an address to the Clergy of the District, announcing this change in the Ecclesiastical regimen, and renewing, in the name and by the authority of his Eminence, most of the faculties previously granted to the Priests. In the course of next week, a Pastoral is expected from the Cardinal-Archbishop.—*Correspondent of Tablet.*

PRESTON, Oct. 8.—The Festival of the Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary was celebrated with great devotion at Preston on Sunday last. At St. Augustine's, where a numerous and increasing Confraternity of the Living Rosary is established, all the members, and other devout clients of Mary, received the Holy Communion, which was administered that morning three several times to four hundred people, at half-past seven, and at the eight and nine o'clock Masses.—*ib.*

SCOTLAND.

THE GREENOCK PAROCHIAL BOARD—QUESTION OF TOLERATION.

[The following important letter has been addressed by the Rev. Mr. Danaher to the editor of the *Greenock Advertiser*, on the late meeting held by the Parochial Board on the question (we may use the word very broadly) of tolerating Catholicism in the workhouse.—*Ed. Tablet:—*]

"Greenock, 28th Sept., 1850.

"Sir—I hope you will allow me to correct a misstatement which Mr. Allison is stated to have made, in your report of the last monthly meeting of the Greenock Parochial Board. He says—'The Roman Catholics number about one-sixth of the entire population of Greenock;' and insinuates that they have no school accommodation except, as he seemingly remarks, 'the paltry room at the chapel.'

"Now, I do not believe the Catholic congregation of this town number above five thousand; they are, I believe, the poorest in the town; yet in this poor congregation there are seven Catholic schools, and not one, as Mr. Allison would have it. In these seven schools there are over four hundred children—all Catholics—receiving instructions daily; so that, if the very limited means of the Catholic congregation of this town be taken into account, they will not be found behind many of the congregations in the three parishes of Greenock in the cause of education.

"If Mr. Allison means that the three hundred children he speaks of as receiving instructions at Mr. Farries' free school are Catholics, his statement is just as unfounded as the former, and entitled to the same amount of credit. Mr. Allison very kindly informs the Catholics, at the end of his oration, that they are at liberty to take them altogether to themselves. This we do not feel inclined to do whilst we pay taxes for their support in the poorhouse, and whilst the law, if but properly administered, protects them from the intolerant interference, in matters of conscience and religion, of such men as Mr. Allison.

"The chairman is reported to have said 'he could not believe the Roman Catholic Priest was sworn to look after the educational training of the children he had baptised.' In this his belief is correct. He is not sworn to do any such thing; but he does not feel himself the less bound, on that account, to see that they are brought up in the profession of that religion in which they were baptised. And hence it is that there are so many Catholic schools through the town, notwithstanding our very limited means; and hence it is, too, that I will avail myself of every form of law to prevent the chairman, or any other man, to bring up the Catholic children in the poorhouse in any other form of belief except that in which they were baptised. In every congregation, I regret to say, persons will be found who are ignorant; it is by no means peculiar to the Catholics. I, too, in my visits through the town, am in as good a position as any Relief Committee to understand the amount of ignorance that prevails; and I might state that it was not one, but many, who were not Catholics, I met with, who were never inside the doors of either a schoolhouse or a church, and who could neither read, nor spell, nor tell who created them.

"Now, I do not say the chairman is to blame for this; but, it would appear to me, he ought to ferret out such cases as these before he interferes with the Priest in the religious training of the few Catholic orphans whom necessity has compelled to seek relief in a poorhouse.

"The chairman is reported to have said, in reply to a question put by Mr. O'Neill—'I say decidedly that these children are of no religious persuasion, and should not be interfered with till they are capable of knowing what is or what is not religious truth.'

"Now, if it be the system in the poorhouse to teach the children no religious persuasion whatsoever, how can it be expected that they will be ever able to know religious truths?—or, is the chairman better pleased that these children should grow up in total ignorance of religious truth, than that the Priest should teach them their duty to God and man? But this is not the case, notwithstanding the chairman's assertion; for the truth is, the Roman Catholic orphan children of the poorhouse are allowed to be present at the in-