

The Life and Catholic Journalism

OF THE LATE

JAMES A. McMASTER,

Editor of the *New York Freeman's Journal* and
Catholic Register.

Edited by REV. MARK S. GROSS.

For the *Carmelite Review*.

CHAPTER II.

THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT LED TO McMASTER'S CAREER AS A CATHOLIC JOURNALIST.—HIS TRIP TO EUROPE.—CARDINAL NEWMAN AND McMASTER.—HIS INTIMATES, WADSWORTH, WALWORTH AND HECKER.—HE ENTERS THE NOVITIATE OF THE REDEMPTORISTS TO BECOME A LAY-BROTHER.—HIS PROVIDENTIAL CALL TO JOURNALISM.—ARCHBISHOP HUGHES AND McMASTER.—HE IS, AT FIRST, SUB-EDITOR OF THE FREEMAN'S JOURNAL, THE REV. JAS. ROOSEVELT BAILEY, D. D., BEING CHIEF EDITOR.

CONTINUED.



In those days of our young convert, religious bigotry was prevalent. Native Americanism was rampant. Broken heads were not uncommon at church doors, and the figure of a convert to Roman Catholicism was peculiarly inviting to attacks from the objectors to his creed. This was the condition of affairs that stirred the faculties of Mr. McMaster. He went into the fray eagerly, and soon showed extraordinary polemical skill in articles written by him for the *Freeman's Journal*.

He came out boldly against all those who attacked his religion, or who uttered and defended opinions that were contrary to its tenets. He showed to Protestants that Christ had built his church upon Peter. "So," said he, "where Peter is there must be Christ's church. And as there is no Peter in any of the Protestant sects, none of them is Christ's church. We can be saved, not in error and heresy, but only in the truth which can be found only in Christ's church.

"Now, God is infinite truth itself. He knows things only as they are, and can speak them only as he knows them. As sovereign Author and Lord of all things, he has an absolute authority over all men.—an authority which He can exercise either

directly by Himself, or through an angel, or a prophet, or one or more of His reasonable creatures. God, therefore, has a right to command, under pain of eternal damnation, the human understanding to believe certain truths; He has a right to command the human will to perform certain duties, and the senses to make certain sacrifices. Nothing can be more reasonable than to submit to such a command of God.

"To know what God has commanded us to believe and to do is to know the true religion or the true way to heaven. As God is but one, so His holy will is but one, and therefore His religion is but one and the same. In order that we might learn, with infallible certainty, this one true religion, Almighty God appointed but one infallible teaching authority—the Roman Catholic Church—and commanded all to hear her and believe her infallible doctrine, under pain of exclusion from eternal life.

"The truth is one; errors are many; the Church, the pillar and ground of truth, is one; sects are many, that deny the truth and the Church's infallible authority to teach truth. Every sensible man, then, seeing a class of men drawn into a whirlpool of endless religious variations and dissensions, is forced to say: This is only an ephemeral sect, without substance and without any divine authority; it is a plant not planted by the hand of Almighty God, and therefore it will be rooted up; it is a kingdom divided against itself, and therefore it will be made desolate; it is a house built on sand, and therefore it cannot stand; it is a cloud without water, which is carried about by the winds; a tree of autumn, unfruitful, twice dead, by want of divine, Catholic faith, and therefore it will be plucked up by the roots; a raging wave of the sea, foaming out its own confusion; a wandering star, to which the storm and darkness are reserved forever; a withered branch cut off from the body of Christ, the One Holy Roman Catholic Church, which alone is established by Christ on earth as His pillar and ground of truth, in one fold, watched over by His own chief shepherd, ever immovable amid the storms of hell; with unshaken faith, amid the variations of philosophical systems, the infernal persecutions of the wicked, the revolutions of empires, the attacks of interest, of prejudice, of passion, the dissolving labors of criticism, the progress of physical, historical, and other sciences, the unrestrained love of novelty, the abuses which sooner or later undermine the most firmly-established human institutions.

"The main spirit of Protestantism has always been to declare every man independent of the divine authority of the Roman Catholic Church, and to substitute for this divine authority a human authority. Pope Pius IX. spoke of Protestantism, in all its forms, as a revolt against God, it being an attempt to substitute a *human* for