

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 I.

THE BIRTH OF JAMES A. McMASTER.—HIS CHILDHOOD AND EARLY MANHOOD.—HIS SCHOLARLY ATTAINMENTS, HIS ENTRANCE INTO THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH AND SEMINARY.—HIS VENERATION FOR THE BLESSED VIRGIN.—HIS CONVERSION TO CATHOLICITY, 1845.—HE IS DISCARDED BY HIS FAMILY AND WORLDLY FRIENDS.

CONTINUED.

**S**T. THOMAS AQUINAS SAYS: "The final beatitude of man consists in the beatific vision of God. As this end of man is far above the strength of human nature, it was necessary that God should teach him how to obtain everlasting beatitude. So God has revealed certain supernatural truths, which are above the human understanding, to lead him to the beatitude of heaven. To acquire the knowledge of these truths, he must learn them from God, through those to whom God has communicated them, and whom he has commissioned to teach them infallibly, in his name. Then it is necessary that he who learns these truths from God through his infallible teacher, should give his firm assent to them. The cause which induces man to give his assent to these supernatural truths may be twofold: it may be exterior, such as a miracle which a person sees, or some one who tries by his words to persuade a person to believe. Neither of these two causes is sufficient to create faith: for of those who see one and the same miracle, and of those who hear the same sermon on faith, there are some who believe and others do not believe. Hence it is necessary to assign another interior cause which induces a person to assent to the truths of faith. The Pelagians (heretics) taught that the free-will of man is this interior cause which induces him to believe, and that on this account the beginning of faith is of man himself, in as much as he is ready to believe divine truths, but that the perfection of faith is from God, who proposes the truths which must be believed. But this is false, for by giving his assent to the truths of faith man is raised above his natural con-

dition, and therefore the cause that raises man above his natural state must be supernatural, moving man interiorly to believe, and this interior supernatural cause is God. Hence the assent to the truths of faith, which is the principal act of faith, must be attributed to God who, by his grace, interiorly moves man to believe the truths of faith. Although the act of believing consists in the will, yet it is necessary that the will of man should be prepared by the grace of God, in order to be raised to those things which are above human nature." (22. q. ii., art. 3., and q. vi., art. 1.) "It is, therefore, necessary that God should enlighten the intellect and move the will of man to believe the true religion when it is preached to him."

No man, therefore, has the natural ability to come into the Church, any more than he has the natural ability to save himself after he has come in. All before and all after is the work of God. We can do nothing of ourselves alone—make not even the first motion without His grace inciting and assisting us. Of no use would have been his Church—it would have been a mere mockery, or a splendid failure—if he had not provided for our entrance as well as for our salvation afterwards.

But God has provided for our entrance. He gives sufficient grace to all men. The grace of prayer is given freely, gratuitously, unto every one. All receive the ability to ask; all, then, can ask; and if they do ask, as sure as God cannot lie, they shall receive the grace to seek; and if they seek, the same divine veracity is pledged that they shall find; and if they find, they may knock; and if they knock, it shall be opened to them. God has said it, Christ is in the Church; he is out of it. In it and out of it he is one and the same, and operates *ad unitatem* (towards unity). He is out of the Church to draw all men into the Church; all have, then, if they will, the assistance of the Infinite God to come in, and if they do not come in, it is their own fault. God withholds nothing necessary. He gives to all, by his grace, everything requisite, and in superabundance. Indeed, God will never refuse to bestow this gift of faith upon those who seek the truth with a sincere heart, use their best endeavors to find it, and sincerely pray for it with confidence and perseverance. Witness Clovis, the heathen king of the Franks. When he, together with his whole army, was in the greatest danger of being defeated by the Alemanni, he prayed as follows:

"Jesus Christ, thou of whom Clotilde (the king's Christian wife) has often told me that thou art the Son of the living God, and that thou givest aid to the hard-pressed, and victory to those who trust in thee; I humbly crave thy powerful assistance. If thou grantest me the victory over my enemies I will believe in thee, and be baptized in thy name; for I have called upon my gods in vain. They must be im-