

as a Jerome, an Augustine, a Hilary and an Ambrose should have been convicted at the usurpation, without any conceivable motive, is an hypothesis worthy of a fool; but that both, the Pontiffs on one side and the salutes on the other, should conspire together, amid the acclamations of the whole Church of Christ, to found a spurious supremacy of the Holy See, which they who accepted exalted even more highly than they who claimed it, upon texts of Scripture which they all feebly misunderstood, and a supposed command of God which they all feebly imagined, is an idea which only the heretic, who is a compound of both demon and fool, could ever have conceived.—American Herald.

THE DREAM OF GERONTIUS.

A book reviewer in the London Weekly Register makes this astonishing statement: "In a letter he (R. L. Stevenson) addressed to the present writer, he spoke of his envy of Cardinal Newman on hearing that 'The Dream of Gerontius' had been the last work of the Cardinal in thinking of the dream of the heretic." On reading these lines one marvels, not why Stevenson did not become a Catholic, but how he could ever have felt so kindly toward the Church as he actually did. How true it is that nobody really hates our holy faith, but only some hideous bogey which is mistaken for it! And how easy it is to disturb the focus of true vision! One of the Sisters at Molokai had in the novelist's presence spoken of the distressful island as "the ticket office for heaven." The phrase savors of the tract society; but it is not offensive, and, of course, was uttered playfully. However, it sets Stevenson musing on what he calls the Catholic habit of keeping "a pass-book with heaven," and of thinking of rewards instead of serving God for sheer love of service. What high perfection Protestants expect to find in Catholics! And "it is only in one direction," observes the Register, "that some Catholics fear to give scandal. Even so.—Ave Maria.

ONLY IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

In the admirable article which he has in the Christmas North American Review on "The Practice of Confession in the Catholic Church," the distinguished English Jesuit, Rev. R. F. Clarke, may be said to justify fully the opposition of those Anglicans who object so strenuously to the practice of certain ministers of their Church in hearing confession.

After pointing out briefly the many natural advantages which confession of one's sins under proper condition confers upon a penitent—he says little of the supernatural benefits attaching to the confessional—Father Clarke admits that, like every other great instrument for good, the confessional is not without its dangers. He claims, however, that against all those dangers the Catholic Church takes the most careful precautions, and then he adds, with the practice of certain High Church Anglicans evidently in his mind:

"But I do not see how they (the aforesaid dangers) can be guarded against in a communion where no such precautions exist; where the confessor has no recognized training for his difficult and responsible duties; where the practice is discouraged and disapproved by those in authority, and is regarded with suspicion and dislike by the mass of those who are invited to avail themselves of it."

Almost this same argument has been leveled against Anglican "confession" by low-church Anglicans, who know that the preachers of their Church have received no training for the dangerous duties they assume when they set themselves up to hear confessions. And to the dangers which are run in such cases should be added the practical uselessness of the confessions in question, for only in the priests of the Catholic Church—not in the invalidly ordained ministers of the Anglican Establishment or of the Protestant Episcopal sect—is vested the power of forgiving sins in the Sacrament of Penance—Catholic Columbian.

A SUBJECT TO PONDER ON.

The case of Dr. de Costa is not without lessons which should not be lost on Catholics, especially those who write and speak on controversial points of doctrine. The objections hitherto felt by this eminent convert are shared by a great many others equally sincere; and his recent sermons, and especially his open letters, shows how such objections can best be dealt with. The most effective way of refuting them is to reduce the objection to its principle. An invaluable chapter of "Brownson's Middle Life" deals with this very subject, and three objections commonly urged by Protestants are thus analyzed:

(1) The state of society in some countries where the Catholic is the predominant religion is not, under the point of view of politics and material prosperity, all that it might, perhaps should be. Therefore the Church does not promote the political and material interests of nations; therefore she is not, and cannot be, the Church of God. A good argument, if our Lord came, as the carnal Jews expected, to be a temporal Prince and to reward His followers with temporal goods; but a very bad argument in one who holds that He came as a spiritual Prince, to found a spiritual kingdom, a kingdom not of this world; who enjoins self-denial, and teaches His followers to expect their reward only in heaven after the close of this life.

(2) A Pope, as temporal sovereign of Rome or in his private capacity, has given some evidence that in either capacity he is neither infallible or impeccable; therefore "Popery" is a huge imposition, and

the Church the synagogue of Satan. Vice and immorality creep now and then, and here and there, into a religious house; the clergy in particular times and places, live more like men of the world than devoted priests of the Most High God; and numbers of the faithful do not rise in their morals or above the ordinary level of the better class of anti-Catholics; therefore the Church is the Mystical Iniquity, and the Pope the Man of Sin. Yet the Master said to His disciples: "Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" Would you have the Church destroy the free will of man, and leave him no merit in his obedience?

(3) Popes or councils have declared that an oath taken to the detriment of the rights or interests of the Church—that is, against the law of God—is an unlawful oath and not obligatory; therefore the Church denies the sanctity of oaths and authorizes perjury. As if a man could be bound by an unlawful oath, or as if he broke an unlawful oath could be perjured! If a man takes an oath to murder his neighbor, must he actually murder him or be a perjurer? To take such oath voluntarily and deliberately is a sin, but the additional sin would be in keeping, not in breaking, it.

—Ave Maria.

FOR THE DEAD.

(From the Pastoral of the Bishop of Frejus. Translated from the French of the "Nouvelles de Montebello" by Rev. Ed. Didier. (Des. No.) Read at Mount Carmel, Baltimore, Sunday, December 10, 1899.)

There are, it is true, some souls whose life was so pure and whose death so holy that there remains nothing to be expiated in the other world. There are others whose life and death, all full of revolts against God, and finished in voluntary impotence, leave nothing to hope for on the part of mercy or of justice. Jesus Christ has proclaimed it: "The just shall go into everlasting life, the wicked to eternal punishments." Glory to the former, wretchedness to the latter forever! But "those whom the terrible sentence has struck," remark St. Chrysostom and Augustine, "we do not know them," and "it is for that reason," add these holy doctors, "that we must pray for all the departed Christians, for fear of depriving a single one of the succor which it claims and to which it has a right on our part." Listen to and retain the dying words of an illustrious Christian. The spectators were admiring his resignation in his cruel sufferings.

"It is a saint," they cried. "My God! what do you say there?" remarked the pious soul, with an accent of sadness and indignation. "With such ideas they will leave me in purgatory till the end of the world. No, I am far from being a saint. You know it. Oh, my God! I am not a saint. I am the feeblest of men."

No, says the Saviour: "nothing defiled shall enter into heaven." It is necessary that every sin, grievous or light, carry its punishment, receive its measure of pain, to expiate even after divine mercy has deigned to cover it with pardon and has received the sinner of the damnation which he deserved. If then a soul, although reconciled by the sacrament of penance which remits our iniquities, has not had the time or has neglected to do penance in this world, the indispensable condition remains no longer to perform it spontaneously, for this is no longer possible, but to suffer by constraint in the other world. The gate of paradise remains, meanwhile, closed. But because God loves these virtuous souls, and His justice alone keeps their happiness in suspense and defers it with regret until they are fully in a state ready to appear before Him, His mercy has willed that their friends on earth should aid them to pay their ransom, so that they may move promptly to deliverance and be crowned.

Such is the faith of the Church, such the belief of all ages, before Calvary and chiefly since, as clear in the history of the Hebrew people as in the monuments of the Christian people. Everywhere and always sacrifices for the dead, prayers, alms, good works for their intention, in the camp of the Machabees and under the tent of the patriarchs, as in the catacombs of Rome regenerated even to the grand day of our modern temples.

A DISTINGUISHED LAYMAN.

References to the English Catholic Truth Society, which has wrought such notable work for the Church, have been so frequent in this magazine that a paragraph or two about Mr. James Britten, the soul of the Society, will be valued by all our readers. Mr. Britten was born in 1846, and was first drawn toward the medical profession. Before completing his studies, however, he was diverted toward botany, to which he was inclined by nature—through the offer of a position in the Kew Herbarium. He was rapidly promoted, and was soon recognized as an authoritative exponent of plant life. In 1891 he was advanced to a post in the botanical department of the British Museum, of which he is now senior assistant; and it is said by one who knows him well, writing in the New Era, that he might have become the head of his department had he not generously waived his claim to promotion in favor of a colleague, the more freely to devote himself to the Catholic Truth Society. For twenty-eight years he has edited the Journal of Botany, and for eight years he was the editor of Nature Notes. He has written a standard work on "European Ferns," and was joint compiler of the "Dictionary of English Plant Names," and of the "Biographical Index of British and Irish Botanists."

Mr. Britten had been brought up in a High Church household, but the writings of Newman and "a seemingly chance meeting with a Catholic priest" helped him into the Church. Soon after his conversion he threw himself into the work of ameliorating the conditions of poor Catholics. Sixteen years ago two kindred spirits met Mr. Britten in his rooms and organized the Catholic Truth Society. The new en-

terprise boasted of a capital of twelve pounds sterling. "Mr. Britten's residence was warehouse, counting-house, and editorial office. He himself was editor, manager, accountant, and office-boy. His own hands tied up and dispatched the orders which first dribbled in." That the society has now become one of the most powerful vehicles of the truth in modern times is largely due to Mr. Britten's initiative and wisdom. In 1897 Pope Leo XIII. made this zealous layman a Knight of St. Gregory the Great.—Ave Maria.

"WHY I BECAME A CATHOLIC."

Interesting Experience of the Hon. Henry C. Dillon, the Eminent California Jurist.

Hon. Henry C. Dillon, the eminent Southern California jurist, read a thoughtful and interesting paper on the subject, "Why I Became a Catholic," at the last meeting of the Newman Club. Mr. Dillon says he would not care to answer the question were it not for the fact that there are many others now considering this important step who might profit by his experience. Continuing, he says, in part: HIS MATURE CONSIDERATION OF THE SUBJECT.

In answering the question, "Why I Became a Catholic," I am painfully aware of the fact that I am dealing with a personal matter, likely to be misunderstood and apt to provoke criticism. I would have been rash to have answered this question sooner. To answer it now, in the second year of my novitiate, after mature thought, constant study of the doctrines of the Church and some experience in her life, the answer may, I hope, have some weight.

When a Protestant, a free thinker, an infidel, if you please, after having arrived at the age of fifty years, and being in the full possession of his faculties, faces about, recounts his cast convictions and adopts the "credo" of the Catholic—a like respect for his old companions in thought requires that he should give good and sufficient reasons therefor. All conversions are the direct result of the interposition of the Holy Spirit. Not even the great apostle of the Gentiles attempted to formulate his theological reasons for his change of faith until long after the light of heaven fell upon him, and time had been given for mature study and reflection.

THINGS THAT DID NOT INFLUENCE JUDGE DILLON.

In attempting to account for such a conversion upon rational grounds, one may say it resulted from the law of heredity. His paternal ancestors were Irish Catholics. He is "a chip of the old block." Like has produced like. No doubt there is some truth in that statement. There is a law called heredity, and our actions are somewhat shaped by it, but it does not govern our beliefs. If it did, there would have been no such thing as Protestantism, and Martin Luther would have remained a monk. A politician might account for it upon the theory that the devout friend (like my good father, Tabb), the completion of good works and, in politics, studiously keeps out, attends strictly to business, such a theory must be abandoned. Moreover, the man who expects to get into office in our day on the strength of his Catholicity, will "cool his heels" a long time in the ante-chambers of the nominating convention. The Catholic vote is a very desirable thing to have, but Catholic candidates are not wanted.

THINGS THAT TURN THE MIND TO GOD.

I have advanced the belief that it is God's Holy Spirit working in the hearts of men, and not argument, which convinces and converts. A great sorrow, reverses of fortune, sickness, the prayer of a devout mother or devoted friend (like my good father, Tabb), the completion of good works and, in politics, studiously keeps out, attends strictly to business, such a theory must be abandoned. Moreover, the man who expects to get into office in our day on the strength of his Catholicity, will "cool his heels" a long time in the ante-chambers of the nominating convention. The Catholic vote is a very desirable thing to have, but Catholic candidates are not wanted.

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be the most fragmentary of books. It was difficult to understand, sometimes apparently contradictory. As a lawyer, the conclusion was formed upon me that an authoritative interpreter was a logical necessity. To admit that was to admit the doctrines of the infallibility of the Pope and all the doctrines of Catholic Church.

SEARCHED MANY ISSUES FOR THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD.

There were ethical reasons, also, why I became a Catholic. From pulpit and platform I had heard much of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man. I was much inclined to the conviction that both of them were to be found in their best estate outside of the churches. A wider experience taught me differently. For a realization of that dream I searched diligently and conscientiously through Odd Fellowship, Masonry, the Liberal League, Unitarianism and kindred ethical societies. But the god of all these was not a father. He was a mere abstraction, a first cause, an over-soul, a law, not a lawgiver.

FOUND THE BROTHERHOOD OF GOD AND BROTHERHOOD OF MAN IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

As for the brotherhood of man, let those who have searched for it through all the secret benevolent societies and fraternal organizations, tell me if they have been more successful than I in finding it. I did not find it until I searched for it in the Catholic Church. There I found the brotherhood kneeling side by side upon the same hard floor. There I found all sorts and conditions of men, all colors, all nations, blended by a common faith in the same Heavenly Father into a universal brotherhood, a Catholic Church. There all tongues confess one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and in one universal language praise God's Holy Name.

Socialism, is an economic system, and Altruism, as its religious counterpart, were also very attractive subjects to me. I was longing for the time to come when the only competition among men might be, "Who best can serve his fellowman." My practical attempts in this direction and those of others which came under my observation, were failures. They were destroyed by the selfishness of man.

CATHOLIC SOCIALISM AND ALTRUISM.

My attention was called to Socialism and Altruism as taught and practiced in the Catholic Church. Monastic life, the brotherhood and sisterhood, were examined. The Franciscans of this coast in particular were studied. All these succeeded in the work they had to do. Some of them have been suppressed in times of persecution by the State—but always to the injury and disgrace of the State. They are still in successful operation. I saw how they gloried the earth with their hospitals, schools and churches; how they had spread from pole to pole; are they also?

A CHURCH ALWAYS COSMOPOLITAN AND DEMOCRATIC.

As I read the history of the Catholic Church in this light, I saw that she had always been cosmopolitan and democratic. The poorest lad could become Pope. There is not a place in the sacred ministry which any ragged, barefoot boy may not reach. Her Popes are elected from all nations. Her missionaries have sacrificed their lives all over the world. Her strength lies in the fact that she is universal. In England the Queen is head of the Church, in Russia the Czar; but the Catholic Church has put before the world the idea of a Church for humanity, bounded by no national lines. National barriers are being broken down.

A. P. A. HELPED HIM INTO THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

I am also bound to acknowledge the obligations I am under to well known friends—the A. P. A's. Long before I had thought of becoming a Catholic, these students of truth declared I was one, and had been seen communing at the altar rail. The more I denied it, the louder the cock crew. At length it occurred to me that a Church which excited the hostility of such men must be a very good Church; and that her doctrines must be true if no weapons better than perjury and forgery could be brought against them. Thus it has always happened to me. I am indebted to both my friends and enemies. Both have helped to bring me into the Catholic Church. The friends led, the enemies drove, and so I got there sooner than I otherwise would.

POLITICS DROVE HIM TO SEEK TRUE MANHOOD SOMEWHERE.

I must also admit my obligations to the politicians and the parties. Without them you would not know all the reasons why I became a Catholic. I had studied them all closely; tried always to vote for the best men on the ticket, regardless of their party affiliations. I believed the world was to be reformed by a new party to grow out of the old. Experience, however, taught me that the new party man was just as hungry for office as the old one, if not more so, because longer from the crib. He was not a bit more honest and not nearly so well qualified. I finally became convinced that the reform of all reforms must consist in growing a better man. Good laws do no good when put in the hands of bad men to execute. Bad laws are short of their badness when put in the hands of good men to enforce. From this the next step was not difficult. The Church, not the party, must grow this man.

THE PUBLIC SCHOOL CANNOT GROW A FULLY DEVELOPED MAN.

Even the Public School cannot grow him, because it is forbidden by law to grow anything but a one-sided man, a half man, and that the worst half. In this reform the wisest of the Protestants

are with us. It is the parent, whether Catholic or Protestant, not the state, upon whom both the right and duty rests. My study and investigation led me to prefer the Catholic system of education for the same reason that I prefer the Catholic Church, but I shall be always glad to extend the right hand of fellowship to parents of every creed, and no creed, who believe with me in Christian education as the reform of all reforms; and that a Godless education is corrupting public life and filling our prisons with the best blood of the land.

Of the infallibility of the Pope, of saints and images, of purgatory and hell, of candles and incense, of penances and indulgences, and other doctrines of the Catholic Church, I have said nothing, because they do not explain why I became a Catholic. They should ever write one—telling why I am a Catholic. Those who are interested in these subjects and earnestly desire to know the truth should read "The Faith of Our Fathers," by Cardinal Gibbons, and other kindred works. "If they will not hear these they will not believe though one rose from the dead."

FACED ABOUT LIKE THE PRODIGAL SON.

When I presented myself, a stranger to our good Bishop Montgomery, and told him that I wanted to become a Catholic, I was already convinced and only needed instructions and the Sacraments of the Church. For these I shall always be grateful to Fathers Clifford and Doyle. I have no apologies to offer, no defence to make for my past conduct and past belief. To the charge that I have entertained various opinions in the past and have not been steadfast and immovable in any one, I enter a plea of guilt.

The prophecy, "He will change again," reminds me of an incident that occurred in a Catholic church in Colorado. A little boy attended Mass for the first time with his father. They both went out of curiosity. It happened that the Bishop was the celebrant, and the boy watched with amazement the changing of the Bishop's vestments before the high altar, a ceremony that seemed to him like undressing and dressing before the people. At length he could stand it no longer and turned to his father with the remark: "Daddy, I wonder what he'll do next?"

Some of my friends and relations are equally solicitous about me. In view of what they regard as my past inconsistencies and changeableness, they wonder "what I'll do next." God only knows. In the words of our great Cardinal Newman I can only say:

"Lead kindly Light;

Lead Thou me on!"

Just as I was, without one plea, I faced about like the prodigal son. My belly was filled with the husks of the thought and reform nostrums. I longed for what Archimedes called Pounto, a place where one can stand and feel the solid ground beneath him. I started back and never stopped until I reached my Father's house. Its portals opened. I became a Catholic. May God give me grace here to remain and manfully to fight under His banner, the Cross, unto my life's end.

SOME OBSTACLES TO CONVERSION.

Protestantism is daily becoming more and more moribund. As a religion it has lost its hold upon the Protestant masses. The descendants of the old Puritans, once so confident and so strict, are now all at sea and wildly drifting in the direction of agnosticism. Meantime the Catholic Church is very much alive in all parts of the land, and rapidly coming to the fore. It offers to our non-Catholic friends a refuge from the doubts by which they are being assailed, and many are being induced to take shelter in that safe retreat. We may say many, but the wonder is that the number is comparatively so small. With all the attractions which Holy Church holds out to weary, wandering souls, the question naturally arises, What are the obstacles that prevent a larger accession to her loving and inviting portals?

In attempting to answer this question we may remark, in the first place, that the greatest obstacle of all is ignorance. If in any way the mass of our Protestant fellow-citizens could become acquainted with the real claims of the Catholic Church—the strength and logical consistency of her intellectual system, the beauty and grandeur of her worship; her admirable adaptation to all the wants and aspirations of the human soul, we can not doubt that they would flock to her portals like doves to their cotes when night cometh on. But the ignorance of the mass of Protestants on these points is really wonderful. Even intelligent, educated men, and men having a reputation for learning, oftentimes display an ignorance of the real teaching of the Catholic Church which is anything but creditable to them. Of course they have read more or less about the Church, and they think they know it all; but, unfortunately for their candor and consistency, their information has all come from non-Catholic sources. They have never thought it worth while to look into a Catholic book to see what Catholics have to say for themselves. In politics they are more reasonable and consistent. The last thing they would think of would be to go to the organs of the opposing party for a correct representation of the opinions of their own party. Yet, they seem not to be conscious of the inconsistency and unreason of adopting

a similar proceeding in deciding the vastly more important questions of religion.

Another obstacle, not less formidable, perhaps, in the way of accepting Catholic truth is prejudice—blind, unreasoning prejudice. Every sensible, right-thinking person will acknowledge, theoretically, at least, the duty and imperative obligation of seeking honestly for the truth, as for hidden treasure, and without fear or favor, following it wherever it may lead. But the great mass of Protestants, under the influence of anti-Catholic prejudice, seem to feel perfectly justified in drawing the line at the Catholic Church. Sometimes they are apparently unconscious of this prejudice, and they will resent the imputation that they are under its influence. Yet, it is there. They have drunk it in with their mother's milk. They have grown up in an atmosphere of prejudice. They have been taught from earliest childhood to look upon the Catholic Church as corrupt and abominable and by all means to be avoided.

They have, indeed, in these latter days, seen reason to modify their opinions. In fact, except in the most retired country districts, they have seen abundant reason to convince them if they were willing to be convinced, that they have been entirely mistaken—that, in fact, there is really no ground for the cock and bull stories which constitute the basis of anti-Catholic prejudice.

Still, they can not get rid of the old feeling. In fact, in too many instances they don't want to be convinced. They don't want to be Catholics, and they prefer to eschew all influences that would incline them in that direction. They seem to have a sort of premonition—at least a strong suspicion—that if they should undertake to investigate the claims of the Catholic Church they would be convinced of their truth and feel compelled consistently to join the Church, and that is just what they don't want to do. They do not stop to reflect that they may possibly be jeopardizing their eternal salvation.

And this brings us to a third obstacle, and that is human respect. The thought occurs to them: What would my friends and neighbors say if I should abandon the religious opinions and associations of a life-time and cast in my lot with those who, if not now hated and despised as they once were here, are certainly not considered by my Protestant friends the most suitable and desirable associates? Catholic congregations, these coward souls say, are so mixed—there are so many poor people among them. They seem to forget that the gospel of Jesus Christ was designed specially for the poor, and that one of the greatest glories of the Catholic Church, and one of the most striking and convincing evidences of its divinity is just this fact—it is the home of the poor. It would be well for such objectors to remember that our Lord Jesus has Himself declared: "Whoever is ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous generation, the Son of Man also will be ashamed of him when He shall come in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."—Sacred Heart Review.

MOORISH HOSPITALITY.

The Ave Maria prints this touching little story of heroic hospitality:

Among the Moors a guest is sacred. Once having eaten with a Moor you may be sure that he will guard you with his life. There is a pretty story told which illustrates this:

A Spanish cavalier had a quarrel with a Moor and slew him. Then the Spaniard ran away as fast as he could, and, seeing a garden wall, jumped over it. His alarm was great when he found that his own house was a Moor. The fugitive fell upon his knees.

"Save me, I implore you!" he cried.

The Moor handed him half a peach and bade him eat it.

"Now you are safe," he said.

"You are my guest. Nothing shall harm you."

He took the Spaniard to his house, locked him in and assured him that he need not worry. Presently there was a loud knocking at the garden gate and a sound of lamentations arose.

"Who is there?" asked the Moor, alarmed for the safety of his guest.

"We bring the body of your son!" was the answer.

The Moor opened the gate without delay and instinctively knew the truth.

"Describe the murderer," he said; and as they obeyed, he knew that his son's slayer was his guest. But he kept the secret. When night came he sought the Spaniard.

"Man," he said, "he whom you killed was my only son. He was the apple of my eye, the joy of my heart; in losing him I have lost all that makes life worth living. But you are my guest; you have eaten within my garden walls. I shall not give you up. You deserve to die, but your blood shall not be upon my hands."

He then led the astonished Spaniard to his stable, mounted him on a fleet horse and bade him begone. The Moor had kept his faith.