

NEEDS OF CONVERTS.

We have published during the past few weeks several letters from converts suggesting that some club or association should be formed through means of which converts might be brought into association with one another, and come to know one another. It is said that for many, if not for most, who become Catholics the change means the loss of the friends they have known in the years preceding their conversion. They do not feel altogether at home in the society of Catholics who have been always Catholics. It is suggested that if the converts could be made to know one another there would be a bond of union in the experience which they had all gone through, and the condition of loneliness and friendlessness which converts suffer from, to a greater or lesser degree, would be very much ameliorated.

The suggestion seems to us to be a good one. We publish in this issue a letter from a subscriber in Helena, Mont., telling how a like want has been supplied in that little city. If there are enough converts in Helena to form a club, and do the work described by our correspondent, certainly there ought to be enough converts in this great city of Chicago to form a similar club, and do similar work, so far as the doing of such work might be deemed advisable. Let the converts get together in some way and see what they can do in the way of organization.—New World.

LOVE IS THE CORE.

It is the Very Central Attribute of the Divinity.

If the thirst of Calvary is over and gone, was not its chief end to assure us of the reality of the eternal thirst and passion of God which there found but a finite and halting utterance?

"For the same thirst," says Mother Julian of Norwich, "that He had upon the root tree (which desire and longing and thirst, as to my sight, was in Him from without beginning), the same hath He yet, and shall have unto the time that the last soul that shall be saved is come up to His bliss. For as truly as there is a property in God of truth and pity; as verily there is in God a property of thirst and longing."

What does the revelation of Christ's human heart import except so far as it brings home, as it were, to our very sense, the truth that Love is the core, the very central attribute of the Divinity round which all the other attributes cluster, from which they spring, on which they depend: that blood and water, guilt and remission, death and life, evil and good, darkness and light, both stream from and return to the same fountain; both manifest one and the same goodness, and owe their seeming difference and coloring to the narrowness and imperfection of our weak faithless vision?

And even if the Eucharist were no more than the bare remembrance of Calvary, it should speak to us principally not of that past human passion, but of the present Divine passion whereof Calvary was but the symbol. But in truth, a better conception of the unreality of time before the Divine mind, will convince us that the simple devotion which regards Christ's passion as continually present, as augmented by our sins, as alleviated by our love, is less inadequate and more philosophically true than the shallowly rationalistic view. For it is only the merciful fading of our memory that prevents our whole past being co-present to us. To Christ it is (and was from eternity) as though the nails were at this moment being driven through His hands.

CATHOLICS IN ENGLAND.

It is very noticeable that in no other country of the world do Catholics show a more intense, sustained and studied sympathy with the Government than they do in England. Perhaps the reason of this is that in no other country are Catholics so fairly treated by the Government in the matter of official representation. Not only are the offices of Postmaster General and Chief Justice held by Catholics, but the highest official in the naval administration of England is also a Catholic. This gentleman is Vice Admiral Lord Kerr, K. C. B. When Lord Kerr was only eight years old, his mother—a remarkable woman—was borne into the Church on the tide of the Oxford Movement. She had the faith of a saint and the courage of a heroine, and it required both to prevail over the influence which aimed at withholding her children from following her. We quote from a sketch in the New Era:

To enable the youngest, then a child of ten, to carry out his earnest desire to be a Catholic, Lady Lothian had to steal out of the house (Newcastle Abbey) early one winter morning, before the household was astir, and take him to Edinburgh, where he was received by Dr. Gillies, the Vicar-Apostolic. As they stealthily crossed the park, they heard the sound of hurried footsteps behind them, and were sure that they were being pursued. But, to Lady Lothian's great joy, the pursuer turned out to be her third son, Lord Ralph, who, having heard of his mother's intention and yielding to an impulse of grace, had determined on joining his little brother in being received into the Church.

As first Lord of the Admiralty, it is the duty of Lord Walter to direct all the important movements of every ship in the British navy; and, though his official duties prevent him from taking prominent part in the great work which English laymen are doing, he has always spoken out vigorously

when the rights of the Church or of Catholics were to be vindicated. It is worthy of remark that he has never found this mainly frankness a bar to official advancement. In 1873 he married Lady Amabel Cowper, a convert and the wielder of a vigorous and industrious pen.

FASHIONABLE CATHOLICITY.

It is common with a certain class of Catholics to show what they doubtless consider their good sense and liberal spirit by speaking lightly of devotions and pious practices that are not of stern obligation. We do not here allude to merely nominal Catholics, but to those who practice their religion after a fashion; and pass in the world as real Catholics—"only not bigoted, you know."

They go to Mass on Sundays, as a rule, approach the sacraments once or twice in the year, and have even been known to attend services not of precept when there were inducements in the form of unwonted pulpit eloquence or musical attractions. But as to saying the rosary, wearing the scapular, or making the Way of the Cross now and then—why, the very suggestion provokes a smile or a shrug; and the non-Catholic friend is hastily informed that these practices are in no way binding, and that for their part, they attach no importance to them.

Of course, these fortunate people may possess spiritual constitutions strong enough to thrive—or, rather survive—on the smallest possible supply of grace; but they should remember that not all are thus spiritually strong, and that we may not scandalize the weak.

There are "the young, young children," whose lives are in our hands for shaping, the youths and maidens with their own impressionable, untutored natures to contend with, as well as the fascinating dangers of the world. Their tender minds have been impressed by pious instructors with the importance of frequent sacraments, of devotion to Mary, mother of peace and purity, manifest in pious practices in her honor, wearing her medal or scapular, or reciting the rosary. They have been taught that these devotions are not merely for the poor and ignorant; that Popes and prelates have loved their beads as the unlettered Irish peasant woman loves hers; that great minds have found in them the inspiration of works that are to day the world's delight; that emperors and princes have worn the scapular under their royal raiment, and been robed for the grave in the poor Franciscan habit or the livery of Mount Carmel.

But the domestic attitude on these points often tells sadly against the school training. The very delicacy of the youthful heart makes it peculiarly susceptible to a sort of false shame, and eager to conform to the prevailing example.

The covert sneers or outspoken railery of the household elders and familiars take the sustaining force out of the examples of remote saints and sages. Intervals between the sacrament lengthen, the scapular is laid aside, and the rosary—if it be a handsome one—is relegated to a place among the bric à brac.

It is easier to destroy than to build up. The young, having successfully emulated the example set them, are seldom prone to go beyond it; and the "liberal" Catholic is apt to be succeeded by a generation Catholic in name but the name.—Catholic Union and Times.

THE PRACTICAL CATHOLIC.

The term "practical Catholic" is applied in so many cases where it is palpably a misnomer that we are led to consider what a practical Catholic really is. Of course, the answer at once suggests itself: A Catholic who practices of his religion is a practical Catholic. But what does the practice of the Catholic religion imply? There is so much misinformation and hazy thinking afloat regarding this point, that a few words on the subject will do no harm and may do much good.

We should think that nobody at this stage of Catholic development would claim that the bare compliance with the requirement of yearly confession and Communion entitles him to be called a practical Catholic who, during the rest of the twelve months, neglects every duty except those that bind under pain of mortal sin—attendance at Sunday and holiday Mass, for instance—and who, even in such matters is lax. There are, nowadays, so many churches and priests, so many attractive spiritual devotions and societies, so many extraordinary appeals at missions and retreats, so many invitations Sunday after Sunday from pulpit and altar to every Catholic to approach the sacraments often, and interest himself in his soul's salvation and the work of the Church, so many reminders of our duties in the Catholic press, that it would be absurd to say that there is lack of opportunity for one who desires to live more closely in touch with the Church; and it would be still more absurd to say that the person who neglects all these means to a life of grace which the Church offers is practicing his religion as he should. The Church fixes as the outer limit of her indulgence the reception of the sacraments of confession and Communion at Easter tide. Like a loving mother thinking considerably of her children, and of the many situations wherein they may be placed which would render this duty impossible of fulfillment often, she is satisfied with the yearly observance of it; but she never ceases to invite her children to partake much more frequently of the spiritual food which she alone can offer—the Body and Blood of

Christ. She never ceases to extol the merits of the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist, deprived of which even the strongest and most steadfast souls waver and weaken. She never ceases to warn her children against the almost impossibility of living in accord with God, unless through the frequent reception of the sacraments which Christ instituted to bring the souls of men more closely to Himself.

To live, therefore, in the spirit of the Church it is necessary that a Catholic do much more than barely the things which, evaded or neglected, make him liable to the guilt of mortal sin. He must approach the sacraments oftener than once a year, must be careful of his daily duties in regard to morning and evening prayer, must see to it that he gives no scandal to his fellow Catholics or to Protestants who judge the Church by the lives of its adherents, must take an interest in the religious, charitable, and temperance societies of his parish, must be loyal to his pastor, must give willingly according to his means that the work of the Church may not languish or falter, must, so far as lie in his power, support all the works—the Catholic press included—that make for the advancement of the Catholic religion. The man who does these things is, in truth, a practical Catholic. To one who does less the word "practical" is, to our thinking, misapplied. No matter how prominent a man may be in politics, in the business world, in social circles, in Catholic organizations—and it is principally among the latter that there is so much talk about practical Catholicism, and it is principally among them, also, that many more real practical Catholics are needed—unless, as far as he is able, he leads a life in accord with the spirit of the Church as it is above indicated, he does not come up to the true Catholic standard, and is undeserving of the name practical Catholic.—Sacred Heart Review.

A MISSION IN EVERY CHURCH.

Secular Journal's Description of the Great Catholic Revival Just Closed in Brooklyn.

Brooklyn Citizen.

"Now is the acceptable time!" thunders the Jesuit, Dominican, Redemptorist, Carmelite, Augustinian, Capuchin or Lazarist missionary from the pulpits of fifty Roman Catholic Churches in Brooklyn. The great revival in the history of the old Church in this country is in progress. What does it mean? That during these weeks of prayer, exhortation, penance and amendment 200,000 Catholics in this city will renew their allegiance to the Church. It means that thousands who had become indifferent or negligent will be restored to the fold; that many conversions will be made; that reformations innumerable will occur and happiness will be brought to many homes; that there will be better husbands and better fathers, and consequently better citizens.

Among the scores of missionaries are many eloquent preachers. They talk not to please their audiences. Their rhetorical flights are sounded out with sledge-hammer blows at the prevailing vices of the day. The sins in the decalogue are handled without gloves. Impurity, intemperance, profanity are exploited in all their heinousness. The sinner's shortcomings are held up before him as faithfully as in a mirror. The justice and mercy of God are explained, and all are exhorted to repentance.

Go to one of the large churches at 5 o'clock in the morning and you will witness the inspiring and edifying spectacle of 1,200 or 1,500 men at prayer before the altar. You will also see at one Mass 300 or 400 of these men approach Communion. They have confessed and formed resolutions of amendment. All manner of men are there—bustling business and professional men, mechanics, laborers, the poor unfortunate—some in fine linen and some in rags—all humbly kneeling together to partake of the sacrament.

Go in the evening and you will hear the mission sermon. The pews are all occupied: the gates of the sanctuary are thrown open, and scores crowd the very steps of the altar. In that crowd is one whose skin is black as those of the darkest of his progenitors stolen generations ago on the coast of Guinea. Meekly the black man sits with a thousand white men at the feet of the missionary.

The good Father deprecates the prevalent vice of profanity—warns his hearers against taking the name of God in vain—and says that reminds him of a story:

"Four years ago we were holding a mission in a neighboring city. A young man who desired to reform came to me and said:

"Father I would give anything if I might conquer the vile habit of swearing that I have contracted."

"My young friend," said I, "I'll tell you how you may overcome that vice. This is my advice: Get a little savings bank. Every time you utter an oath or an obscene word drop a dime into the bank. See how that will work."

"About six weeks afterward I met the young man on the street and he stopped me. 'Father, he said, 'I want to thank you for your practical advice. You remember I told you I could not stop swearing, but, thank God, I have conquered and use no more profanity. But, Father, I assure you my first three weeks wages went into that little bank.'"

This sadly puts the audience in a good humor, and while in this receptive mood the missionary delivers a

homily on the degrading vice that makes a deep impression on all its listeners.

Each night the prominent vices are taken up in their order and exposed, followed by a reminder of death that is inevitable, and after death judgment. At the close of the mission all attend and receive the Papal Benediction, after being exhorted to keep their good resolutions.

This is the first time that missions have been held simultaneously in all the churches of the diocese of Brooklyn, and nothing like it has ever before taken place in any Catholic diocese in America, probably not in Europe. The holding of the missions here was by order of the ordinary of the diocese, Bishop McDonnell, who acted upon Pope Leo's recommendation that Catholics throughout the world close the year of 1899 with special devotions. The form which these devotions should take was left to the ordinary of each diocese to determine for his flock, and Bishop McDonnell chose missions.

MISSIONARY WORK AMONG NON-CATHOLICS.

A recent number of the Missionary, organ of the Catholic Missionary Union for the conversion of non-Catholics, shows that the work is constantly increasing, the missionaries are gaining experience, and the blessing of God seems to accompany the work to a remarkable degree. Some forty priests are engaged in this blessed work, and the reports from the various missionary fields are full of encouragement, and we confess, we know not how it is possible for a Catholic who has a spark of love for, and loyalty to Holy Church, to read those reports without having his heart stirred with him with thankfulness to God and a sincere desire to aid in furthering the good work by every means in his power.

As specimens take the following. The report of Rev. L. J. Vaughan, of the diocese of La Crosse, is full of stirring interest. Alluding to a former report of his labors he says:

"I had thought myself well acquainted with the non-Catholic character, but I was amazed at the reception I received in non-Catholic towns. The really greedy eagerness with which they grasped at truth touched me to the heart, and I resolved to devote my life to their instruction. Not once have I spoken to non-Catholics that I have not been compelled to hold an informal reception in the hall, often for upwards of an hour, answering the earnest questions of souls awakened by Catholic truth and Catholic grace."

Together, Father Vaughan and Rev. Arthur B. C. Danne of Eau Claire, who have long been interested in the work, started out on their mission, and in spite of difficulties and obstacles resolved to ask for no assistance from any person, but to place themselves in the hands of God and push on their work. And he says:

"Our success has been the wonder of this locality. We have given during the spring about twelve straight weeks of missions, besides the single talks; distributed five hundred copies of the Faith of Our Fathers free; have not asked a dollar of anybody, and to day we stand with all accounts settled and but little out of pocket."

He gives several instances illustrating the effects of their instruction which we should be glad to give, but our space will not allow.

But the most astounding report comes from Father Elias H. Younan, C. S. P., of the result of his labors, under the auspices of Bishop Scanlan, in Salt Lake City, the citadel of Mormonism. As the Catholic Church was entirely too small to hold the crowds of people who desired to attend the missions, the Mormon leaders, with great generosity and courtesy, offered them the free use of their grand Assembly hall, even the Tabernacle. They were glad to give it to us," they said, "for so noble a purpose," and added, "they would not have given it to any other denomination." Some of their Bishops announced that confessions of faith made in synod or conference by confessedly faithful men do not deserve the respect and reverence they heretofore, for some unaccountable reason, gave them. The wonder is, not that Protestantism is decaying, but that, with the cancer of private judgment eating at its vitals, it has lingered so long. There is no life-sustaining principle in protest and negation, and Protestautism could not have endured so long as it has were it not that in revolting against the Catholic Church it retained many Catholic truths. Oa these it has lived. But like the law of erosion, which wears away the mountain rock, time and free thought or private judgment are obliterating from the Protestant mind those Catholic truths it started with, and the result is the present accelerating drift from Christianity to skepticism, agnosticism and infidelity.

If the founders of this republic had left the Constitution, the organic law, to be interpreted by the private judgment of each citizen, and had not provided a Supreme Court as the judge of its meaning, how long could the Government have resisted disintegration?

It would be to-day a mere memory, and as such a monument of political ineptitude and folly. The Reformation, so far as it could, and for its adherents, deprived Christianity of its Supreme Court and left the fundamental law to the interpretation of the individual. Hence the confusion of conflicting sects and the consequent disintegration of Protestantism and the decay of the Christian faith among its adherents. The result of the original error is inevitable, and there is no return,

and more intellectual classes were beginning to come in, tortured by doubts and difficulties, and as some three hundred attended for those weeks all the lectures and explanations of the Catholic Church and felt drawn to her teachings. A rich harvest of souls is only gained by the steady labor of weeks. The longer the stay the richer the harvest."

There is plenty more of interesting, edifying and stimulating reading in the number of the Missionary from which we quote, and we earnestly recommend all who have not done so to get a copy and read it.—Sacred Heart Review.

DECLINE OF PRESBYTERIANISM.

The New York Observer (Presbyterian) speaks despondingly of the future of Presbyterianism. It says:

"A study of recent Presbyterian statistics furnishes food for serious reflection. The number of persons added to the entire Church on examination has decreased by regular steps from 75,000 in 1894 to 48,000 last year. The number added by certificate has decreased with like regularity in the same time from 42,000 to 35,000. The net gain in membership has shown an even more marked decrease: in 1895, the net gain reported to the Assembly was 27,000; in 1896, 21,000; in 1897, 17,000; in 1898, 15,000; in 1899, only 8,000. This last was a gain of five-sixths of one per cent. of the previous membership; four years ago the net gain was three per cent."

"Last year the strong Synod of New Jersey suffered a net loss in membership of 423 and in two years' time it has made the pathetic increase of 23 persons. The great Synod of New York made a net gain last year 48 souls, just four per month, but the year before it lost more than it gained last year; and it is therefore smaller by 885 than it was two years ago. The Synod of Indiana suffered a loss last year of 132, and in three years has gone back 1,124 in membership. The Synods of Wisconsin and Nebraska, situated in the growing West though they are, both fell off in membership last year. The Synod of Pennsylvania, the largest in the Church, presents a somewhat better record, for it reports a net gain of 2,203, and yet that is only a trifle over one per cent., and the Presbytery of Philadelphia is one of five Presbyteries within its bounds to report a decrease."

"A study of our Sabbath school statistics is equally suggestive. A year ago last May, the General Assembly commenced the Twentieth Century Movement, and strongly urged Presbyteries and churches to adopt it. This movement contemplated the addition of 500,000 scholars to our rolls before April, 1901, that is, in three years' time. At the end of the first year our Sabbath school membership had decreased, in spite of the indefatigable labors of the Rev. Dr. Worden, secretary of the Sabbath School Board, by 4,935. How long, at that rate, will it take to accomplish the coveted 500,000 increase? Our surprise and our sorrow are increased when we note that the Synod of Pennsylvania contributes one-fourth of this loss, and that the city of Philadelphia shows a balance on the wrong side of the account. There is something startling in the fact that Philadelphia, the very citadel of Presbyterianism, should show a net loss in the same year both in church and in Sabbath school membership, and that the very centre from which has sounded forth the trumpet call of progress to our Sabbath schools throughout the land should itself fail to respond to that call."

The writer of the above is puzzled to account for the noted decadence. He says the general conspiracy of so many facts extending over such a period of time cannot be laid to chance.

This falling away from Presbyterianism is but a part of the general falling away from Protestantism. The Protestant masses, taught to rely on their private judgment, have gradually worked out the logical conclusion that confessions of faith made in synod or conference by confessedly faithful men do not deserve the respect and reverence they heretofore, for some unaccountable reason, gave them. The wonder is, not that Protestantism is decaying, but that, with the cancer of private judgment eating at its vitals, it has lingered so long. There is no life-sustaining principle in protest and negation, and Protestautism could not have endured so long as it has were it not that in revolting against the Catholic Church it retained many Catholic truths. Oa these it has lived. But like the law of erosion, which wears away the mountain rock, time and free thought or private judgment are obliterating from the Protestant mind those Catholic truths it started with, and the result is the present accelerating drift from Christianity to skepticism, agnosticism and infidelity.

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except to Rome, and individually.—New York Freeman's Journal.

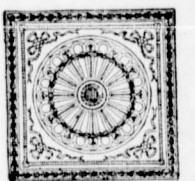
CONDEMNNS PRAYERS.

Among the prayers and forms of devotion condemned by a recent decree of the Congregation of Indulgences we notice one prayer, a salutation to Our Lady of Sorrows, which has had place in approved prayer-books for upwards of thirty years. The moral of the decree would seem to be to fall back on the old-fashioned forms of devotion, consecrated by the use of saints; though they have no special indulgences attached to them, they are at least excellent in themselves. The condemned prayer to which we refer is said to have been highly indulged by Pius IX, but the indulgence is now declared to be spurious. What is named but all similar inventions and superstitions. All such practices and devotions as "a prayer to the Holy Cross, to which is attached the promise of the deliverance of five souls from purgatory if recited five times on Fridays," are sure to be authoritatively condemned at some future time, though industriously propagated now. Superstitious devotions are injurious to the faithful and scandalous to unbelievers; there are more of them than have yet been specifically prohibited.—Ave Maria.

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