

STORY OF A CONVERT.

The First Awakening—Step by Step to the True Faith.

The Citizen.

Conversions present, doubtless, both an exterior and an interior pathway—objective influences, mysterious impressions—a whole not readily made intelligible to others.

Both my father and my mother before their acquaintance began, had, for conscience sake, joined the Methodists, a sect at that date heartily despised.

I began to suffer agonizing tortures of mind concerning my salvation while I was still very young. Conscience for childish faults sufficed to make me fear the anger of God and condemnation to hell if I died unrepented, and Methodism furnishes no reliable assurance of forgiveness.

Having given a hearing to orthodox and heterodox sections of Protestantism, I became a socialist, and admired Fourier, had unbounded trust in the good intentions of every human being, and a determination to "prove all things and hold fast the good."

Leaving the occult, I resume the thread of my story just a year previous to the happy finale. The conversion of Dr. T. L. Nichols and his wife appeared then as an item of news in the papers.

A moment's reflection in which I asked what knowledge I had of the Catholic Church that did not come from its enemies, and what I thought of the representation our enemies made of us, and I stood convicted of meanness at the tribunal of my own conscience.

liner, with whom I had a business acquaintance, she relieved me of difficulty by mentioning the item of news regarding Dr. N.'s conversion. I told her I had noticed it and wished to read some Catholic books if I could loan them.

After an absence of about five months I was again in the village, and visited the milliner on business. The good dealer in bonnets handed me a little catechism, saying she thought I might like to look it over.

The new world of Catholic literature opening before them demanded the exclusive attention they were willing to give. My spirit, he said, seemed to him so Catholic that he advised me to go to the Bishop of Chicago for instruction, if, as he supposed, there was no priest located nearer; and to procure Faber's "Creator and Creature" and "Questions of the Soul" and "The Following of Christ."

I wished to be baptized the first Sunday after Easter. The priest overruled the wish, deferring it to the second Sunday after Easter, which was, though I did not then recall the fact, the anniversary of my baptism when eight days old.

THE BREAD OF HEAVEN.

Why God Gives Himself to Man in the Form of Food.

The gift of the Eucharist is so sublime that the very saints have been thrilled with awe as they tried to penetrate the reasons that induced the Lord to make it.

Yet although the solemn homage thus paid to the Blessed Sacrament is glorious to the Son of God, this cannot have been His ultimate object in instituting the Feast.

If our Lord Jesus Christ had consulted only the interests of His Divine Majesty, He would not thus have placed Himself, as it were, within the range of Satanic hatred, as He did His sacred Humanity, in the hands of His executors, on the day of His Passion; for, in fact, taking all in all, the life of Jesus on the altar both as a Victim in the Sacrifice, or as our Guest in the Sacrament, is but a sorrowful continuation, hardly compensated for by some passing moments of bliss, of the dread mysteries of His Passion.

Nor would we consider the mystery of the Eucharist sufficiently explained,

as we read in some books of devotion, written more affectively than solidly, by saying that the love of Our Lord draws Him irresistibly towards our souls, and that His love is satisfied only by self-sacrifice and self-abasement. True, "His delight is to be with the children of men;" but we can hardly think so much of ourselves as to imagine that we are necessary for His happiness, or that our loss would be a real loss to Him; considering that, do what we will, we must eternally glorify either His Infinite Attributes—His Mercy or His Justice.

This is a reflection that invites the serious attention of all Catholics who care to be saved. If Jesus saw that His giving Himself in Communion to us was such a necessity that He submitted on that account to all the indignities and neglect consequent on His Real Presence; ought not we to conclude that our salvation, if saved one day, will be owing to the Communion we shall have received, and our damnation, if lost, to the Communion we shall have forgone?

How sad a fact it is, then, that some Catholics are to be dragged to the Holy Table, by the threat of mortal sin, to receive their Lord, the Food of their Souls! The first Christians received Him daily, for "They were persevering in the doctrine of the Apostles, and in the communication of the breaking of bread, and in prayers." Pope St. Fabian, finding that the original fervor was no more, enjoined Holy Communion three times a year: at Easter, on Whit-sunday, and at Christmas; and at last, Pope Innocent III. in the Lateran Council, finding that even so little proved too much for lukewarm Catholics, decreed that, at the very least, we should be obliged to receive Him once a year, and this under penalty of mortal sin, if we fail—a fact that ought to make us blush, as it makes the Angels wince.

When we shall be on our death-bed and the world will escape our grasp, then Holy Communion will be our only comfort, our only refuge, then the thought of the many times we lovingly received Him will be our only joy, and the remembrance of the many times we neglected doing so will be our bitterest regret.

THE ANGELUS.

How sweetly does the Angelus bell ring out upon the evening air in the quiet of the country scenes! It there seems vested with some charm which makes men's thoughts turn instinctively towards Mary, whose angelic purity it announces.

but the truth is that nowhere does the ringing of the Angelus bell have such an influence, such an abiding influence, as in the country. Perhaps the distance of the sound, mellowed by coming so far through the still air, has something to do with it. Perhaps the very stillness of the air impresses the observer with awe. However it may be, most men irresistibly grow silent when the sound of the bell breaks the calmness of the summer air.

"And yet, my brethren, so it is. He has sent forth for the ministry of reconciliation, not angels, but men; He has sent forth your brethren to you, not beings of some unknown nature and some strange blood, but of your own borne and your own flesh, to preach to you.

over the sins of the fast dying day. The sun sinks lower and lower. The crimson deepens in the western sky. Still rings on the Angelus bell, with its far-distant cadence like the prayers of absent friends. Softly it calls us. Gently it raises our hearts from the sordid earth to the regions of purer joys. Upward, onward goes the heart through the shining gates of the west to the streets of pearl and palaces of alabaster and jacinth, hyacinth and porphyry, cleansed and whitened, from the dust of earth. Now clearer and stronger, with commanding tone, clangs the brazen tongue, calling with powerful note to prayer. Pray! Pray! Pray! tells its song. Turn to God! is its hymn. Then slowly, regretfully, it sounds its last call. It seems to bid a sorrowful farewell to the day, to part with pain from the light. It goes down the valley, and dies far out on the bosom of the lake. Now it tells of sorrow, of repentance, of simple childlike faith. Hope! Hope! Hope! it rings. Come! Come! Come! It begs the sinner, it invites the saint. The sun has sunk to its tomb at last, only a few crimson rays linger to tell of its departed glory.

There was one street with tumble-down wooden houses on both sides of it, and not a half dozen of them occupied. The little wooden shed, once the depot of the place, was in an advanced state of dilapidation; even the platform was stripped of most of its boards. There was the wreck of a huge grain elevator nearby, with grain-spouts broken off, and the open door hanging by one hinge. Across the track one could see that streets had been laid out for a town of some magnitude, but they had never been built upon and were now grass-grown.

THE MISSIONARY EN ROUTE.

Rev. Samuel B. Hedger, C. S. P., in Donahoe's Magazine.

Sometimes a sight greets you from without that awakens interest and sets you thinking. I believe it was somewhere in Nebraska that our train came to a stop at what had been once a town.

THE GREAT CARDINAL NEWMAN PREACHING ON THE SUBJECT "MEN, NOT ANGELS, THE PRIESTS OF THE GOSPEL."

The great Cardinal Newman preaching on the subject "Men, not Angels, the Priests of the Gospel," said in part: "When Christ, the great Prophet and the Preacher, the great missionary, came into the world, He came in a way the most holy, the most august, and the most glorious. Though He came in humiliation, though He came to suffer, though He was born in a stable, though He was laid in a manger, yet He issued from the womb of an Immaculate Mother, and His infant form shone with heavenly light. Sanctity marked every lineament of His character and every circumstance of His mission. Gabriel announced His Incarnation; a Virgin conceived, a Virgin bore, a Virgin suckled Him; His foster father was the pure and saintly Joseph; angels proclaimed His birth; a luminous star spread the news among the heathen; the austere Baptist went before His face; and a crowd of shaven penitents, clad in white garments and radiant with grace, followed Him wherever He went. As the sun in heaven shines through the clouds, and is reflected in the landscape, so the eternal Sun of justice when He rose upon the earth, turned night into day, and in His brightness made all things bright.

"If they were to sacrifice, as He had sacrificed; to continue, repeat, apply, the very Sacrifice which He had offered; to take into their hands that very Victim which was He Himself; to bind and to loose, to bless and to ban, to receive the confessions of His people, and to give them absolution for their sins; to teach them the way of truth, and to guide them along the way of peace; who was sufficient for these things but an inhabitant of those blessed realms of which the Lord is the never-failing Light?

men, in order that they may 'condole' with those who are in ignorance and error, because they too are compassed with infirmity. Had angels been your priests, my brethren, they could not have consoled with you, sympathized with you, have had compassion on you, felt tenderly for you, and made allowances for you—we can; they could not have led you on from your old selves into a new life, as they can who come from the midst of you, who have been led on themselves as you are to be led, who know well your difficulties, who have had experience, at least of your temptations, who know the strength of the flesh and the wiles of the devil, even though they have baffled them, who are already disposed to take your part, and are indulgent to ward you, and can advise you most practically and warn you most seasonably and prudently.

"Among the preachers, among the priests of the Gospel there have been apostles, there have been martyrs, there have been doctors—saints in plenty among them; yet out of them all, high as has been their sanctity, varied their graces, awful their gifts, there has not been one who did not begin with the old Adam; not one of them who was not hewn out of the same rock as the most obdurate of reprobates; not one of them who was not fashioned unto honor out of the same clay which has been the material of the most polluted and vilest of sinners; not one who was not by nature a brother of those poor souls who have now commenced an eternal fellowship with the devil, and are lost in hell. Grace has vanquished nature, that is the history of the saints."—Catholic Review.

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Opposite the depot, however, there was one building, resplendent in a new coat of paint, and over the door, in gilt letters, was the sign "Saloon Tom's Place." Behind it was a neat two-story cottage, likewise newly painted, with a yard in which were flower-beds, bright with blooming geraniums. It seemed to me as if that saloon had sucked away the money, the industry, the prosperity, of the entire place; that it had settled down on the village like a cancer and had eaten away its very life. "A boom town with the boom fallen out," said some one. "Perhaps so, but to my mind the evil of that place was before my eyes, and out came my notebook. That picture would illustrate a point in a temperance lecture some day.

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