

LIFE AND CATHOLIC JOURNALISM

—OF THE LATE—

JAMES A. McMASTER,

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CHAPTER XI—CONTINUED.



HE Presbyterian life of Mr. McMaster was a most interesting chapter. Even after he had repudiated Presbyterianism, its early and strong impressions, discipline and training gave to his manners and struggles a certain charm of sternness, sincerity and vigor. Even his fondness for the classics was an inheritance from the higher Scotch life, and Edinboro was to him in a certain sense a modern Athens. He was the youngest son of a distinguished Presbyterian minister of one of New York's rural districts, and the young Covenanter was brought up under parental and church traditions. He learned from practical experiences what authority and obedience meant. In any relation of after life when he was a subject he implicitly obeyed—so likewise when he was a superior, as he certainly was in the office of the *Freeman's Journal*, he made everyone feel that he must be obeyed. I could name more than one assistant who realized this condition. The positiveness of the Presbyterian tenets so harmonized with his character that he was long blinded to their inconsistencies. He never liked anything half way. He could tolerate water, he could relish milk, but he abhorred milk and water mixed. While he did not find in Presbyterianism, nor could his aggressive mind have found it in any of the sects, all that his heart sought, yet he found in it elements that went to create and foster a strong belief in a personal God and in the revealed system of divine rewards and punishments. As his active and vigorous mind canvassed and

scrutinized unsparingly even the religious society and tenets of his youth and young manhood, he was not slow in detecting its weak points and untenable assumptions. In this he was chiefly struck with the claim of the Presbyterian Church to be the Church of Christ, while the absence of the Apostolic Succession was fatally absent. It was in search of the Apostolic Succession that his journey through the logic of religions led him to the Church nearest to him that laid claim to that indispensable mark of the true Church, and this was the Episcopal Church. It claimed the Apostolic Succession.

Mr. McMaster had now started in search of the true religion, as revealed by Our Saviour to the Apostles. He scanned the claims of the Episcopal Church even more closely than he had those of the Presbyterian sect. Assertion was not enough for him; proof was the duty of truth, and truth must be the possessor of proof. He found the claim of the Episcopal Church to the Apostolic Succession to be a mere pretension. The Presbyterian Church, not claiming it, had never possessed or severed it. But the Episcopal Church, claiming it, had both severed it and forfeited it. It was, however, sufficiently removed from the errors of Presbyterianism to be a safer guide, an intermediate ground. But it proved itself so near the Catholic Church as to show how openly rebellious it was against the Church of God, and how inconsistent it was with its own tenets. It was an easy church to live in, and it was in a worldly aspect so very respectable. He could not feel satisfied with this, for his Presbyterian training even had taught him the spirit of sacrifice for conscience sake. But in the Episcopal Church he found the conscience had quite an easy time. I once heard a prominent public man, an Episco-