

fore deciding it. I would have been saved to the Church, and my life for nearly forty years of misery and unrest. Immediately on taking up the attitude of resistance to the Church's decision, I fell, *ipso facto*, into the Protestant attitude of the right of private judgment in all questions of religious faith, and thereby fell heir to the biggest job I've ever had, as follows: If I am to be my own guide in questions of faith and morals and choose for myself one among the many jarring sects which are drumming souls with their clash of creeds, I must study them all in order to choose intelligently, and, poor fool that I was, I tried to do it, but found life too short to get around. Still, I think I did study as fully as my limitations would permit, most of the prominent known systems of theology and several unknown ones which I tried to get up myself, but on which I hold no patent, nor have I applied for any. It seems to me that any Protestant of fairly logical mind, holding the principle of the right of private judgment and responsibility for the results of the exercise of that judgment, must face a logical necessity, the study of the Catholic doctrine, unless he wishes to take the position of a dear lady I heard speak of Catholics and say: "I don't know a thing in the world about them, but I don't like them." But to proceed—all this study and clash produced a condition of mind in which I was "tossed about by every wind of doctrine" and could find rest nowhere, for owing to wilful perversity I would not (I said could not) look for it in Christ's holy Church, where only it could have been or be found.

Yet all the time I yearned for church affiliation of some sort—felt as if I would spiritually die without it, and regarding it as impossible to return to the bosom of Holy Mother Church I entered the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Texas. I worked hard in prayer meetings and Sunday school and all other departments of Church work, was soon ordained a ruling elder of my congregation and took part in public speaking and prayer. Soon pressure was brought on me by my pastor and others to enter the ranks of their ministry; they said it was my duty to do it, the church needed me. I replied "All right, I'll try to do anything that is a duty." So at the next meeting of the Marshall Presbytery of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, which was held at Lodi, Texas, I offered myself to that body as a candidate for the ministry, relating to them my religious experience as much as I could here, and adding that my only ground of dissatisfaction with the Catholic Church was the dogma of infallibility. On that statement the Presbytery received me as a candidate and placed me under the care of the Presbyterian Committee on literature and theology, who were to direct my studies and preparation. Immediately I began preaching or doing something I called preaching, to four different Churches, every Sunday. I kept this up till the next meeting of the Presbytery, which was six months from the date of my reception. At the second meeting of the Presbytery I was examined by the Committee on literature and theology. After the examinations were concluded and I had retired from the committee room, a member of the committee approached me and said: "The Committee is ready to report to the Presbytery, but before reporting, desires to know if you will accept ordination." This came as an absolute shock to me, as the very most I had expected was, if my proficiency in studies was satisfactory, that I would be recommended for license to preach. I came very near refusing the ordination, and was unwilling to accept it, and afraid not to, so my answer was: "I don't think that you ought to lay the responsibility of this decision on me, and I will not accept it. You must decide the matter, and I hope you will decide right, but remember St. Paul's injunction to Timothy in the matter of ordaining preachers—Lay hands suddenly on no man." The result was that the Committee that night reported satisfaction as to my proficiency in studies (I've always thought they were easily satisfied) and ordered that I be licensed to preach at the meeting of Presbytery next morning, and that at the night session I be required to preach a sermon for the Presbytery as a part of my trial for ordination. If that proved satisfactory to the body I should then be regularly ordained and set apart to the whole work of the gospel ministry by the imposition of the hands of Presbytery and prayer, all of which was done. I was immediately called to the pastorate of a church, and then my trouble began. I never had given up my views as to the Real Presence of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. I knew I was not qualified to confer anything of sacramental character on the elements of bread and wine, and yet as a minister I had to consecrate them by prayer, and the burden would have crushed me but for my placing strong emphasis on the memorial feature of communion. And I am still inclined to the belief (speaking with submission and under correction) that in the case of any Protestant sincerely endeavoring to walk in all the light he has, and devoutly partaking of bread and wine as memorial to Him of broken body and shed blood of our Redeemer, will become a better man thereby and that our gracious Lord will make of the act a means of grace to the recipient, and of glory to himself. And at the present I do not feel in advancing this opinion tentatively I forfeit one iota of my loyalty and reverence to

and for our Most Holy Church and Her Sacraments, and if it is an error I humbly ask pardon of Almighty God and Holy Church, and hereby retract it. Another feature of my administration of Communion was that I was accustomed to carry the communion to the sick in my pastoral care, the only case, to my knowledge, of any Protestant minister doing this, and this brought about another difficulty. The communion, with the church to which I was attached, is a Church ordinance, administered by the authority of the church only, and as a minister I had no sacerdotal character or authority to empower me to administer it at all, apart from the church. I obviated this by taking two elders with me. Two elders with the pastor constitute a quorum of the church session, competent to transact all church business, and administer the ordinances. So technically at least, in the presence of my two elders, I had authority to administer the communion, which I employed this expedient was this. I called on a poor woman who for many months had been dying of consumption and had never professed faith in Christ. I sympathized with and tried to help her, and found her very tractable and amenable to gospel teaching, so far as I was capable of imparting it. She was the wife of a prominent saloon keeper, and on that account the family was properly or otherwise frowned down by the rigidly righteous "better class" in the little North Texas town where all this occurred, which may account for her telling me that I was the first and only minister who had ever visited her. At all events, on my second or third visit she professed faith in Christ as her Saviour and seemed to become more peaceful and happy and beautifully resigned to the death which was then so inevitably near. I asked her if she desired communion and she grasped eagerly at the proposition. So the next Sunday I took two elders with me and administered communion after baptizing her, and she seemed to find comfort and happiness in it. The second Sunday after, I officiated at her funeral. My God grant rest to her soul. Amen. Many difficulties like these, and others I met. One was that often when preaching or trying to, the scriptures would vividly flash through my mind and shock me. "Lest when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." Then when I would contemplate giving it all up I would be confronted by the other: "For necessity is upon me, and woe is me if I preach not the gospel." While in all this confusion I can only hope I led no one astray to the peril of their souls. If I did, may God forgive me. I do not recall any preaching I ever did which I could not conscientiously preach as a Catholic, if the Church allowed me to preach at all. In fact I never preached anything but repentance toward God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and I believe the Lord has honored the message I so feebly and unworthily delivered, in the salvation of at least some souls. I do not feel this to be an arrogant claim. He has said His Word shall not return to Him void." He has said He will honor His word, and I believe He does and will wherever, however, and by whomsoever preached, even if the devil preach it, as he has done, on occasions. Still, it is not strange that the message that I claim to have been a blessing to others, brought no blessing to its deliverer? Do you wonder that in this blind groping in the dark, without one ray of "kindly light" to "lead one on" the burden became so crushing that in sheer desperation I cast it down, resolved to preach to others no longer something which brought no more peace to myself. After seven years of this struggle I applied to my Presbytery of Marshall for a letter of dismissal and recommendation which they granted in terms certifying that I was a regularly ordained minister of their body in good standing, and was dismissed therefrom at my own request, and recommended me to the favorable consideration of the people of God wherever my lot might be cast. So ended that chapter. I have no word of censure or unkindness for the brethren I left. I remember with gratitude the many kindnesses they did me, and many undeserved honors they placed on me.

Among these men are many devout, humble and sincere Christians according to their light, and I pray God to bless them and above all to grant them the crowning grace of true faith and admittance to the Fold of the one Shepherd here, and a home with Him hereafter. My story is almost done. After the point at which my ministerial life ended my spiritual trouble increased. I tried all I could to do, but I was not thinking of religion at all. For years (I'm ashamed to say how many) I did not open a Bible, and when rebuked by my good wife for this I replied that I knew plenty of it to condemn my life without studying any more. I never thank God, became atheistic. To say nothing of religion or grace, I had more sense than that, but I was beginning to wallow in the slime of agnosticism, when from the lowest depths I began to call on the name of the Lord and He was quick, as He ever is, to answer the cry for help. In my extremity my first response to the feeble glimmerings of the light of God's grace, so nearly extinguished in my heart, was to request a dear old friend of mine in the town of Pineville, Louisiana, to see that I did not die without the priest, for my health at that time was bad. A very short time after this, God sent two Paulists (Fathers Skinner and O'Hern) to conduct a mission in the little town. The Mission was blessed

in the salvation of my soul and of many others, thank God. Since, I have endeavored to do God's will as He reveals it to me. I have no doubt now as to Infallibility, nor, to tell the truth, have I ever had an honest doubt about it. I put in forty years trying not to believe it, constituted myself a devil's advocate to assail the Dogma and collect all the evidence I could find against it, and then told people "I could not believe it." It was "an intellectual impossibility." Did you ever notice how intellectual a fellow gets when he is full of the devil? If not, look around you. God has wonderfully blessed me in plucking me forth from the mire pit in which my soul was almost finally suffocated. Since then He has laid the hand of affliction heavily on me and those far dearer than my own life, but He has given me grace to say "Thy Will be done." In view of the prolonged agony before my eyes, of the dearest one I loved, the mother of my children, before He mercifully took her out of it, in view of forty years of wasted life and opportunity which should have been spent for God, and out of which I let the devil cheat Him and me; in view, I say, of all these things, I cannot be happy, nor, I say it with reverence, do I think the Blessed Lord in Gethsemane could be happy, and yet He could and did say "Thy Will be done." And I thank Him for grace to say it with Him, and that He permits me to spend the remainder of my unworthy life closely in His service, in penance for my sins, and in praise and devotion to Himself. And when the cloister shades envelop me, as they very soon will, I humbly ask the prayers of all Christians whose eyes may fall upon the lines of this experience. And may God grant that they who have or are tempted to think they have sinned away the day of grace, for surely no one was ever nearer that yet He has saved me. In conclusion let me offer a tribute of sincere affection to the best friend a man ever had, the one who has been most potent of all human agencies, in the redemption of my life. I speak of the apostolic man and Bishop, the leader and example to the flock of which God has made him an overseer, the model Christian and citizen, the faithful priest, the stainless and courteous gentleman, and the loving, loyal and self-sacrificing friend, Right Reverend Cornelius Van de Ven, Bishop of Alexandria, Louisiana. God bless him and send us more like him—*Ad multos annos!* I will close by offering this testimony. All the peace and spiritual consolation I have experienced came to me either before I left the Holy Catholic Church, or since I returned to her bosom. (Signed) ISAAC L. GAMEWELL.

AN ANGLICAN MONASTERY MONSIGNOR BENSON DESCRIBES THE LIFE THEREIN

In view of the reception into the Catholic Church of the Anglican monks of Caldey, and of the Anglican nuns of Milford Haven; and in view of the expected conversion of other similar communities, the following article by Mgr. Robert Hugh Benson, son of the late Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury, describing his life in an Anglican monastery at Mitford, Yorkshire, England, will be timely, interesting and instructive to readers of the Catholic Telegraph: "I WAS TO LIVE AS THE FRIARS HAD LIVED" I had an interview with Dr. Gore, in his canon's house at Westminster, and was definitely accepted as a probationer of the community of the Resurrection, of whose fame I have heard again and again. Dr. Gore was extremely kind and sympathetic; he seemed to understand my inspirations, and was deeply impressed both by his own hearing and by the quiet religious atmosphere of the house. It seemed to me that all my troubles were at an end. I was intensely excited and pleased at the thought of the new life that was opening me! and it became easier than ever to treat all Roman difficulties as diabolical temptations. I see now that my attention was distracted, and my imagination filled with other visions; I was not really settled; but when I went up to Birkenhead for the annual retreat of the community, with which my probation was to begin, I can sincerely say that no thought of henceforth ever leaving the Anglican communion appeared conceivable. I was to be launched in a new sea altogether; I was to live as the friars had lived fifty years ago; I was to dedicate myself to God once and for all in the highest vocation open to man. It will be impossible for me ever to acknowledge adequately the debt of gratitude which I owe to the Community of the Resurrection, or the admiration which I always felt, and still feel, toward their method and spirit. All that it is possible to describe is the external aspect of their life, and to hint at the deep Christian charity and brotherliness and devotion that existed beneath it. OUR DAILY LIFE We lived in a great house standing in its own gardens, at the top of a hill above the valley of the Calder. It was a somewhat smoky country; there were tall chimneys visible all round us; but the land that belonged to the house prevented any sensation of being pressed upon or crowded. Our external life was a modification

of the old religious rules, and resembled, so far as I understand, a kind of combination of the Redemptorist and the Benedictine. Some of the brethren were engaged almost entirely in scholars' work—the editing of liturgical, hymnal, expository and devotional works; and for the use of these there was a large library of about 15,000 volumes. The rest, who were the majority spent about half the year in prayer and study at home, the rest of it in evangelistic and mission work. Our life was in very simple and practical lines. We rose about 5.45, and went at once to the chapel for morning prayer, and the Communion service; at 8 we breakfasted; at 8.45 we said Terce, and made a meditation. Until 1.10 we worked in the library or our own rooms; then, after Sext and intercessions, we dined. In the afternoon we took exercise—walking or gardening; at 4.30 we said None and had tea. We worked again until 7, when we sang Evensong; we supped at the half-hour; and, after work for an hour or two, we said Compline at 9.45, and went to our rooms. On Saturday morning a chapter was held, at which, all kneeling, made a public confession of external breaches of the rule. THE GRADUAL CHANGES The community life was, when I first went there, in a somewhat transitional state; the brethren were feeling their way in the direction of the greater strictness; and by the time that I left them, four years later, a considerable development had taken place toward a more completely religious character. Silence, for example, was extended gradually, until at last we did not speak from Compline in the evening until dinner next day; manual work for so many hours a week was made an absolute rule; we broke up and carried coal, cleaned our own boots, and made our beds. The dress of the community, which was at first rather nondescript, developed more or less steadily in the direction of a habit, consisting of a double-breasted cassock, girded with a leather belt. Originally, too, the head of the community was commonly addressed as "Senior;" but when Dr. Gore was appointed Bishop of Birmingham, and a new principal was elected, this title was supplanted by that of "Superior." The title "Father," which was at first somewhat unusual, became almost universal, although one or two members still disliked its significance. These changes, which the majority, including myself, ardently desired, were not carried out without protest on the part of three or four members; and, although nothing resembling bitterness ever made its appearance, one Brother at any rate found himself compelled to withdraw at last at the time of the annual renewal of vows. OUR VOWS It is more difficult to explain those vows. Roughly speaking the probation lasted normally for one full year—from July to July—after which, if the probationer received the votes of the community, he made his profession. This consisted of an absolute promise to observe the rule of the community for thirteen months, and an expression of his deliberate intention to remain in it for life. Profession, therefore, was not in the least of the nature of an experiment; it meant practically a life intention, though an escape was provided if the life for any reason became intolerable. It was less rigid, therefore, than that of the ordinary Catholic Orders, but more rigid than that of such congregations as the Oratorian. We numbered about 14 members, all of whom had had experience of parish work. We had no lay-brothers, but the necessary household duties which we did not do ourselves were done by 3 or 4 servants. Now, however, the members of the community have risen to about 20; a large College of the Resurrection has been built in the grounds for the education of poor men for the ministry; a hostel has been opened in Leeds, and a community house in Johannesburg. A chapel also, I believe, is in course of erection; but while I was there we used a large room in the house, very skillfully and beautifully adapted for worship. THE SENSE OF BEAUTY AND MYSTERY Our worship was really dignified and devotional, but did not in its ritual rise above the ordinary level of the Anglo-Catholic party in general. We used vestments, at first of linen, but later, by means of a gift made through me to the community, we substituted colored vestments. We used incense unceremonially, in accordance with the Lambeth "opinions;" and for our music sang, for the most part, unaccompanied plain song adapted to the Book of Common Prayer. Frankly, we did not sing well, but we did our best; and I shall not easily forget the sense of beauty and mystery at our song celebration early on Sunday mornings. The altar was on the approved English type, with "riddels;" two candles stood upon the altar, two more upon the posts of the curtains, and two more in standards. We had a sanctuary lamp, which I always disliked, since it did not signify anything in particular. It is impossible to describe the happiness which I enjoyed at Mirfield. For about one year, I did very little external preaching, and busied myself almost entirely in theological study and prayer. My "novice master" was an admirable guide of souls; and, although I did not go to confession to him, I always felt that

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he was able and willing to help me. For a while there was only one other parishioner besides myself—an Irishman of great eloquence and fervor, who developed into an extremely capable mission preacher. We were thrown together a great deal, and I found in him an open enthusiasm of faith and confidence in the Church of England which did much to reassure my own.

"I SAID MY ROSARY REGULARLY" When the time of my profession drew near, however, I began somewhat to distrust my suitability for the life. It was not that I was troubled with Roman difficulties, for these had practically vanished; but owing to a certain resolution, passed by the community in view of a crisis in the Church of England, I began to think that my position was too "advanced" for my contentment in the house. "By this time I had learned to hold practically all the dogmas of the Catholic Church except that of the Pope's infallibility." I said my Rosary regularly; I invoked the saints; I thought that the word "Transubstantiation" best expressed the reality of Our Lord's presence in the Sacrament; I held that penance was the normal means by which post-baptismal mortal sins were remitted; I used the word "Mass" freely at home. Those doctrines, too, I preached in veiled language, and found that by them, and them alone, could I arouse the enthusiasm of congregations—those doctrines at least set forth round the adorable person of Christ, which, remembering the lessons of "John Inglesant" I endeavored to make the center of my teaching. I remember, for example, being told once by an indignant curate that my doctrine seemed "a mixture of Romanism and Wesleyanism"—an accusation that brought me the greatest satisfaction. The community in general, on the other hand, seemed to me at that time to be over-cautious, to desire to dissociate themselves from the extreme party in the Church of England; and it was to this party that I now belonged.

IN THE CONFSSIONAL The end was that I postponed my profession for one year, in order to test myself yet further. But that year removed my difficulties. I began to be more and more encouraged in mission work, and to find that my quiet life at Mirfield gave me a power that I could obtain in no other way. It is hard for Catholics to believe it, but it is a fact that as an Anglican I had far longer hours in the confessional than I have ever had in the Catholic Church—though, of course, this is to be accounted for by the fact that since becoming a Catholic I have never preached a mission. In one London parish, for instance, for about four days at the end of a mission, my brother missionary and I interviewed people, hearing confessions and recommending resolutions and rules of life, for over eleven hours each day. Two more hours were occupied in delivering sermons to vast congregations. This, however, was after my profession. Yet everywhere it seemed as if an immense work was waiting to be done. We came from our quiet life red hot with zeal, and found everywhere men and women who seemed to have been waiting for us in an extraordinary manner. We saw conversions everywhere; we saw sinners changed by the power of God, children unkindled and taught the lukewarm set on fire, and the obstinate broken down. It was impossible to doubt that the grace of God was at work here; and if the Church of England was capable of being a vessel of so much honor, why any longer need one doubt of her divine mission? And since that was so, and since also I had found such extreme happiness and inspiration in the life at Mirfield, why should I any longer hesitate to commit myself to it?

MY NEW CASCOCK Before my profession I was asked by Dr. Gore, greatly to my surprise, whether I was in any danger of lapsing to Rome. I honestly told him, "No, so far as I could see;" and in July, 1901, I took the step without alarm. It was an extraordinarily happy day. I obtained a new cascock for the purpose—which, strangely enough, I am wearing at this moment, adapted to the Roman cut. My mother came up; and was present in the tiny ante-chapel. I was formally installed; my hand was kissed by the brethren; I pronounced my vows, and received Communion as a seal and pledge of stability. In the afternoon I drove out with my mother in a kind of ecstasy of contentment. "A CITY OF CONFUSION" Then once more I set to work, I think the most trying part of my

external work lay in the strange varieties of doctrine and ceremonial with which I became acquainted. As a rule, of course, we were asked to conduct missions only in parishes where our standard was accepted. (We were not, I believe, however, regarded as quite satisfactory by the extreme party of Ritualists; and this, no doubt, was partly owing to Dr. Gore's position. He was identified, rightly or wrongly, with the High-Liberal School; he was supposed to be unsound; and to the doctrine of the Incarnation his views irremediably. Here, as well as on Higher Criticism, were considered dangerous; he was thought a little extravagant on the subject of Christian Socialism. And all this, of course, was a certain distress to me, since on these three points I was not at all one of his disciples.) But what was far more trying was my experience of churches where I gave an occasional sermon, and where the clergyman did not feel that the merely passing presence of a Brother would compromise him irremediably. Here, as well as in the three churches of Mirfield, which we attended on Sunday evenings, I found all kinds of teaching and ceremonial. In one church they would wear elaborate stoles, but no vestments with doctrine to correspond; in another, vestments would be used at services to which the important Protestants did not come; teaching on the Real Presence would be skillfully veiled, and penance would be referred to in a hasty aside as the "Sacrament of reconciliation," or taught explicitly only to a favored few at some small guild service. MY CONFIDENCE SHAKEN It was possible after a very little experience to diagnose, almost at a glance, the exact doctrinal level of the teaching given; and in such places it was my custom to preach the love of Jesus Christ or the joy of penance or the Fatherhood of God with all the fervor I had, in the hope that those truths would find their normal outcome some day in those who heard me. But this was all very unsatisfactory, and gradually, no doubt, though I did not realize it at the time, began to shake my confidence once more in the Church of England as a Divine Teacher. I used to hurry back to Mirfield as if to a refuge; for there at least there was peace and unanimity. My intellectual escape from the difficulty seemed to me, however, quite convincing. "IN MY DREAMS I AM BACK AT MIRFIELD" There, then, I settled down for nearly two years as a professed member of the community—during about one year extremely happy and confident (except once or twice when my old difficulties suddenly recurred for a while, and then left me again), finding, as I have said before, a brotherliness and companionship that is beyond appreciation. Still, in my dreams sometimes I am back at Mirfield, though never, thank God, as an Anglican! Once, I remember Cardinal Merry del Val had been appointed superior, and had received the submission of the community; and I, too, was back there, happy and exultant, standing in the library, and laughing with pure joy. Once I was there, I thought, as a Catholic priest; and found that, although there should have been a barrier of shyness between the community and myself, there was none. We

stood together in the hall, and talked as four years ago. Yet I have never been back there, although I should like to go for a visit, even without the Cardinal; but the community judges otherwise. It was there, too, that I first began to systematise my devotion, and to attempt the art of meditation; and it was here that God rewarded me abundantly for my poor efforts. He was preparing me, as I see now very well, for the great decision that He was to set before me so soon.

"I BECAME A CATHOLIC BECAUSE" First: "Every rational and instructed man ought to believe in God." Second: "One who believes in God ought to believe in Christ and His revelation." Third: "Whoever believes in Christ and Christianity ought to believe in the Catholic Church, whose center of unity and seat of sovereignty is the Roman See of Peter." V. Reverend Augustine F. Hewitt, C. S. P. Thus the road to Truth is clear and short to minds without guile.—The Missionary.

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