

less figure in black, the poor mother would kneel at the altar rails, her pleading eyes...

New Year's Day came—it was three days now since John had made known his determination. What an eternity it seemed!

A New Year's gift rewarded her, indeed, on the breakfast table. With trembling fingers she tore open the long white envelope so prettily addressed.

It was, truly, the answer of the Sacred Heart, although, that New Year's Day, she could hardly see at once how fully and generously that most liberal Heart had responded to her piteous appeal to His tenderness.

She drew forth a cheery pink-covered booklet first. What was this? There was the title, The Irish Messenger of the Sacred Heart, the gentle figure of the young Saviour looking compassionately upon her, there was St. Patrick, fatherly and kind, there was the morning sun of hope, as she liked to interpret it, the morning sun of returning prosperity, and the benedictions of the Sacred Heart dawning in beauty over their own island home.

Mary did not know the Messenger well; she had subscribed to it once in the long ago, but it was many a dreary day since she had seen a copy.

"Come, Mary, it is sleepin' you are over that little book?" her husband's gruff tones suddenly broke in upon her reverie. He had been gruff than ever, those last days; the emigrant ship so close at hand, was far less attractive than he had supposed, and the lanes and fields, the still peaceful hills and his tiny cottage home, humbled as it was, were suddenly surprisingly beautiful, and dearer than he had known.

She handed him the pink journal whose very cover had roused such thoughts in her. There was a letter as well. It was from Miss Davis, the lady who had, not long ago, come to live in the big house over at Kilmorra, and was such an old friend of Father McNally's, the parish priest. In it she had enclosed a Badge for each member of the family, and a Sacred Heart Shield to hang on the door was also in the packet. She was most anxious to do some little thing for the Sacred Heart, it seemed, and, with her kindly-worried New Year's wishes, she told Mrs. Flanagan that she would like her to accept of the Messenger, monthly, from her for the coming year, adding that she should like to see her the next day about some sewing which she wished undertaken for her.

It was a ray of hope. Here at least, was some work. Mary Flanagan excelled in all domestic duties, and she knew that she owed this opportunity to the recommendations of their good priest. Then there was just the chance that something for John might also be procured through Miss Davis' kind offices. She set down to the perusal of the Messenger, later that day, with a prayer, a hope that grew, by the time she had read it through, to a fervent desire and a strong trust in the loving kindness of the Heart of Him Who can do all things.

"Nothing is impossible to prayer," she read; and the words echoed and re-echoed like a beautiful refrain in her heart, the while she set down to write the petition for the prayers of the Apostleship, which that same evening saw on route for the Messenger office.

"John, dear," she said a day or two later, as that plating had needled busily on the work which Miss Davis had entrusted her, "I was thinking there was a resolution we might perhaps be taking, all of us." "I mean to make the Nine Fridays together this year for us to get out of this trouble an' be able to make our living here in holy Ireland, instead of in that weary, far away America. God only knows, John, how well we'd get on over there. There's that young Tom Clancy went away two years ago, and it's never a line his poor old mother has had from him this long time. There was Tim and Michael O'Neill—by all accounts they can earnly keep themselves, an' weren't they the brave boys before they went, going to send for Moira and Ellen and little Rose, and keep the old father and mother as well. Poor Andy O'Connell that's dead, too, he simply starved to death. An' when they did get work they're killed entirely with it—an' who's caring,

all the time, whether they live or die?" "God an' His Blessed Mother do, anyway," replied John, who felt the force of her arguments and had, moreover, just read in the Messenger a letter from an exile that had given him much food for thought, but he was not going to abandon his position.

"Ay, God an' His Blessed Mother," repeated Mary slowly. "But, John, this is their own land; sure, they won't be so near you over there. An' who's to tell whether poor exiles will get work anywhere that's near a church, either? The young people, too, it's not always they're true to God and His Blessed Mother once they get on in that country—or even if they don't get on."

John agreed to join her, and the two eldest in the Nine Fridays for the betterment of their position—would not mention emigration as yet.

Time went on. The winter was a hard one, but still, with Miss Davis' help, the Flanagans were able to face the darkest days. It was hard sometimes, for the amount that Mary could make was not considerable, and little could be done by her employer for John. And he could not obtain any employment otherwise, so far, as he would find it. By dint of scraping and saving, however, by the cheerful acceptance of many an unavoidable privation, by methodical and well-thought-out arrangement of her small income, Mrs. Flanagan managed to tide them through.

It was, perhaps, John who prayed hardest of all during those trying times. For it was dreadful for him, the bread-winner, not to be able to make provision for his dear ones, to be dependent on her who should have been supported by him.

"Mary, avourneen," said he one day, "sure, I do be askin' the Blessed Mother every day when I'm at the beads to find me some work. But I was thinkin' maybe she'd hear us quicker if we all said the Rosary together in the evenings for it."

And so she did. For about a fortnight after the Family Rosary had been established among them, on the third of the Nine Fridays with which they opened the New Year, John Flanagan's fortunes took suddenly a turn for the better. It was on that day that he got the first real employment he had had for many a month. One of the neighboring farmers, a fairly well-to-do man, was ill, and likely to remain long within doors. He had no children and few relatives; to the man in his service he did not care to entrust so great a charge as his own duties involved; he did not know what to do to find a sufficiently competent and, at the same time, absolutely trust-worthy man to supply the deficiency. Thus he had complained to good Father McNally. And the priest had so strongly recommended John Flanagan that James Murphy had engaged him there and then.

"Mary," said her husband five weeks later, "if the Sacred Heart will give me a permanent job like this, I'll never think again of emigration, or let the children either, as long as I'm here to stop them." "Perhaps it was Mary Flanagan who wrote to their little friend the Messenger in thanksgiving, not so very long ago, 'for being saved from emigration and for a good home in holy Ireland; two requests that had seemed impossible to obtain.' But, however that was, it is true that the Flanagans are to be seen every First Friday faithfully, at the Altar rails. They are making the Nine Fridays in thanksgiving, they will tell you always. And every evening you may hear the rise and fall of the Avee round Our Lady's statue on the white altar with its fresh flowers. 'There is no music like that of the Family Rosary,' says Mrs. Flanagan. Our Lady thinks so, too.

There is just one other resolution the family is thinking of taking—perhaps in thanksgiving also, for a happier little band you would find it hard to discover anywhere; and that is to invite the Sacred Heart to their own hearts oftener than on First Fridays and on Sundays and Feasts only—even daily, as obedient children of our Holy Father should. "For what's the use," says Mrs. Flanagan, smilingly, "of living in holy Ireland without being holy yourself? of being in the land of the Sacred Heart without having a lot to do with Him? Sure, that's the resolution that's going to be our New Year's gift to Him, in return for all He's given us through the dear little Messenger, our New Year's gift."—Thamonda, in the Irish Messenger.

"NO TIME, NO EXCUSE" "I would gladly do so," some one will say, "if I only had time." My answer is, first, your excuse is a bad one; you have no time, because you do not wish to have time. Whoever has the good-will finds time for Holy Communion. I wish, however, to remark at once, that I am far from wishing to urge anyone to go to Holy Communion, if thereby he would be obliged to neglect the duties of his calling and position in life; but, at the same time, I should like to point out that anyone who divides his time properly and makes a conscientious use of it, will always find that he can go to Holy Communion. It does not occupy much time! We waste hours in idle conversations, in eating and drinking; we even find time unhelpfully for sin: have we none at all for God. What we lack is not time, but good-will. Any one who is in the habit of going to Mass on week days can make his preparations during

Mass, and need spend only a quarter of an hour in thanksgiving, and even this quarter of an hour is not wasted from his work, for it is a matter of common experience that we work better and with greater industry after going to Holy Communion.—The Sentinel of the Blessed Sacrament.

NATURAL RIGHT OF LABOR UNIONISM

"It is better that two should be together than one," says the Holy Scripture, "for they have the advantage of each other's company. If one fall he will be supported by the other. Woe to him that is alone, for when he falleth he hath none to lift him up." With these words Pope Leo XIII. begins his defense of what he describes as the "natural right" of association. This he extends equally to the State and to private organizations, particularly including workmen's societies, for whose special justification his argument is built up. Their right to existence has always been sanctioned in Catholic times.

Men aim to perfect themselves, and have a natural right to do so within the due limits of justice and morality. To attain that end most effectually they require each other's assistance. This is obtained through association. Hence the natural right, not merely of the family and the State, but of private organizations as well, such as those of capital and labor. No social institutions, on the other hand, are so sacred that they do not admit of abuses, least of all industrial associations. But this can obviously be no reason for challenging the natural right which underlies them. The family is not to be destroyed because of the reeking evils of divorce and birth-control in the modern paganized society; nor is the State, as such, to be attacked because of the despotism so often associated with it, whether under the false doctrine of the Divine right of kings or the equal tyranny of a Bolshevik misrule.

Labor unionism is therefore built upon the same natural right as the family and the State. Objectible as particular unions must become when in the hands of atheistic Socialist workers, the natural right itself of labor unionism remains untouched. Under the present economic system its application is of the utmost importance. Aside from those two most fundamental forms of society, the family and the State, we do not hesitate to say that the need of secular organization is nowhere more imperatively felt than where the worker finds himself confronted today with the vital problem of securing a livelihood for himself and his family.

The right itself on which labor unions rests is prior to the historic existence of the State. It lies beyond the power of any legislature. As a natural right it antedates all positive law and cannot be abrogated by it. Legislation cannot prevent labor organizations that do not set for themselves evil ends, or employ unlawful means, or come into conflict with the public welfare. Only when they are evidently bad, unlawful or dangerous to the State may the latter interfere, and even then, as Pope Leo wisely says, "every precaution is to be taken not to violate the rights of individuals, and not to impose unreasonable regulations, under pretence of public benefit." For the State to forbid any rightful association of citizens that does not infringe upon the public good would be, in the words of this great social teacher, to contradict the very principle on which its own existence is based. "For to enter into a society of this kind is the natural right of man; and the State is bound to protect natural rights, not to destroy them."

Associations, whether of labor or capital, have not merely a clear right to existence, but they are entirely free to adopt whatever rules and organization may best conduce to the attainment of their respective objects," with the understanding always that justice and charity are observed towards all, and that the common good of the community is placed above all special interests of these private groups. If labor has often fallen short in these respects, capital surely has failed far more signally as social history bears witness. The special object of labor unions, according to Pope Leo XIII., will consist in the help afforded each individual member "to better his condition to the utmost in body, mind and property."

The Church, as is obvious, does not indiscriminately approve of every organization of labor by the mere act of proclaiming the natural right of labor unionism, just as she is far from approving of every association of capital. She has, moreover, her own definite ideals, particularly for Catholic workmen, which are clearly set down in the Encyclical to which reference is made throughout this article. But even the most deplorable conditions existing anywhere in the labor world have never led her to attack labor unionism in itself. Such conditions may call for the purification of the existing organizations, or else the gathering of self-respecting workmen into new labor unions that will not imperil the spiritual interests of the workers.

Nothing could be more clear upon this point than the eloquent words of the great Bishop Ketteler, spoken at a time when the labor organizations of his country were mainly in the hands of infidels. It was the tendency of the age, as he keenly saw, for workmen to combine "for the purpose of gaining a hearing for their just claims by united action." He approved heartily of such action, as not merely justified but absolutely necessary on account of the existing economic conditions, and then thus continued to urge Catholics not merely to encourage this movement, but enthusiastically to participate in it: "It would be a great folly on our part if we kept aloof from this movement merely because it happens at the present time to be promoted chiefly by men who are hostile to Christianity. The air remains God's air though breathed by an atheist, and the bread we eat is no less the nourishment provided for us by God though kneaded by an unbeliever. It is the same with unionism: It is an idea that rests on the Divine order of things and is essentially Christian, though the men who favor it most do not recognize the finger of God in it and often turn it to a wicked use."

Unionism, however, is not merely legitimate in itself and worthy of our support, but Christianity alone commands the indispensable elements for directing it properly and making it a real and lasting benefit to the working classes. Just as the great teacher which uplifts and educates the workman, his individuality and personality, are Christian truths, so also Christianity has the great ideas and living forces capable of imparting life and vigor to the workmen's associations. "The truth of these last words is sufficiently clear from the labor history of the Middle Ages. Labor unionism today assumes, indeed, a greatly different aspect from that which presented in the days of the medieval guild, yet it is based upon the same natural rights and the same human needs. It is therefore as universally defended, in principle, by all the Catholic spokesmen of our age as the guild system was in the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. On this point a perfect unanimity exists. The encyclicals of the Sovereign Pontiffs, the joint pastorals of the Bishops of various countries, and the statements of all recognized social exponents insist with all their strength upon the right of labor unionism. More than this they seek in every practical and Christian way to lend it their support. 'It is an idea,' as Bishop Ketteler says, 'that rests on the Divine order of things and is essentially Christian.'"

In the same spirit, too, the Committee of the War and the Religious Outlook of the United States did not hesitate to state clearly in its recent report that: "The right of the worker to organize and bargain collectively is at present an elementary means of self-protection." A momentous problem, doubtless, for the Catholic workmen presents itself in various countries of the world when there is question of determining the nature of the workmen's association to which he is to give his allegiance. But this is a subject that does not concern us here. One practical question, however, remains to be treated. Should the laborer's right of organization be confined to his own plant, as some employers seem in practice, if not in theory, to hold? The question would be equally pertinent if we were to ask whether the employers should be confined to organizing within their own corporations, and not permitted to join in natural associations. What is true for capital in this regard is true for labor, or rather a greater liberty should be conceded to the latter because its need of organization is far greater than that of the employers as a class. Capital and labor, according to Pope Leo XIII., are equally free to adopt whatever organization or rules they believe will best conduce to the attainment of their particular object. There can be no doubt that labor, as a body, needs first of all national unions, which for constructive work can well be supplemented by shop committees. As for the function of the State in this matter the same Pontiff adds: "Let the State watch over these societies of citizens handed together for the exercise of their rights; but let it not thrust itself into their peculiar concerns and organize them." Such an act would be permitted only where the common good is evidently affected. Labor is entirely free, precisely like the employer, in the choice of the representatives through whom it believes it can most effectively carry on collective bargaining. It alone is to decide whether it wishes to choose them from its shop organization or from its national union. In the latter case it must of course seek to avoid the disagreeable situation sometimes when the union's business agent is ill-informed or unscrupulous or autocratic in his methods. The employers would keenly resent the intrusion of labor where there is question of deciding about their own legal advisers or agents. The workers surely have the same right to deal on equal terms with those who engage their services. It is particularly illegal for employers to seek to confine their workers to their own shop organizations. "The worker must claim the same full right of free association. Both labor unions and employers' associations have the same imperative duty to maintain justice and charity in all the relations between employers and employed, while both classes must place the public good above all private interests. When these conditions are not observed there is reason to object against the

offending group or person. But who is to throw the first stone?—Joseph Huslein S. J., in America.

NEW YEAR'S EVE

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky, The flying cloud, the frosty light, The year is dying in the night; Ring out, wild bells, and let him die, Ring out the old, ring in the new, Ring happy bells, across the snow; The year is going, let him go; Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind, For those that here we see no more; Ring out the feud of rich and poor, Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause, And ancient forms of party strife; Ring in the nobler modes of life, With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin, The faithless coldness of the times; Ring out, ring out, my mournful rhymes, But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood, The civic slander and the spite; Ring in the love of truth and right, Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease; Ring out the narrowing lust of gold; Ring out the thousand wars of old, Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free, The larger heart, the kinder hand; Ring in the darkness of the land, Ring in the Christ that is to be.

PLIABILITY OF MIND

In the Biblical World of September Shailer Mathews discusses the subject of "changing one's religious mind." He says that, on the one hand frequent changes of mind taken a vacillating character, while, on the other hand, the reluctance to change it on the presentation of new evidence is neither honest nor creditable to a Christian. As a general proposition this statement may go unchallenged. But in its practical application it has not the same meaning and scope for all Christians.

Let us begin with some distinctions. The attitude of the mind towards a proposition of religion, say the existence of God, may be denial, doubt, surmise, opinion, or certitude. He who denies it refuses his assent, he who doubts it suspends his assent, he who surmises it inclines his assent, he who has an opinion about it embraces the proposition though with a misgiving of being possibly mistaken, he who has certitude embraces the proposition without the least fear of being mistaken.

Now it stands to reason that a change of mind from denial upward to certitude is a laudable thing and cannot honestly or virtuously be refused in the face of evidence. You cannot honestly deny or doubt what you know to be so and not otherwise. And this is precisely the meaning of evidence. That in science there are things we know to be so and not otherwise, is plain; for instance, the multiplication table or the laws of physics and chemistry. To change one's mind in regard to these scientific facts once attained would be a retrogression from truth to error.

But is there a final certitude, even on this earth, also in matters of religion or faith? If so, there may be a state of the religious mind where change would be neither honest nor creditable to a Christian. Now, Catholics believe that there is such a state of certitude in matters of religion, because their faith comprises the consent of the infallible teaching authority of the Church. Protestants, on the contrary, waive the claim of the infallibility of their churches and proclaim the principle of private judgment as the right of each individual Christian. Hence, while they may be certain about the Bible as the word of God, they can, in accordance with their very principles, have no final certitude about His interpretation. And it is this interpretation that matters. For, after all, it depends on the interpretations whether you get the mind of God out of the Bible or not. For us Catholics the infallibility of the Church guarantees the correctness of the interpretation, and as far as the Church's authentic interpretation has covered the field of divine revelation our mental certitude is fixed and unchangeable.

From this it follows at once that a Protestant may become a Catholic without doing violence to the principles of his religion. He is professing a searcher after religious truth. Private judgment is his native right, and, as we said above, his church does not claim to be his infallible guide. Hence if a Protestant, by reading the Scriptures with his private judgment, has come to recognize the Catholic Church as the true church and joins it, no one can blame him for this move without, at least implicitly, both denying the right of private judgment and asserting the infallibility of the denomination from which he has withdrawn. A Catholic, on the contrary, by leaving his Church, violates a fundamental principle of his religion. He is truly an apostate, while this name in no way belongs to a Protestant convert to the Catholic Church.

So much, then, we have from this discussion that a Protestant, to be true to his religion, must ever be ready to change his religious mind,

while a Catholic, to be true to his religion, must have an absolutely settled religious mind as far as it is imbued with the authoritative teachings of his Church. Whether this position of the Catholic is objectively correct depends on the question whether the Church is really infallible. It cannot be our present purpose to enter into arguments on this subject. But does it not seem antecedently plausible that God giving a revelation to mankind would make his gift perfect by giving it in an official interpretation? So did the Fathers of this country not only give us a Constitution but a Supreme Court also to interpret it. Without the latter the Constitution would have become a source of confusion and disruption, as has been the case with the Bible wherever the authority of the Church has been set aside.—S. in The Guardian.

SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Notwithstanding the wave of materialism that has been sweeping over the world many spiritual signs are appearing to show that the lessons of the War purchased with so many heartaches are making an impression upon the consciences of people. Men are beginning to ask not what did the War achieve, but what did it reveal.

The first hopeful sign is the collapse of the materialistic and anti-Catholic propaganda that was so widespread before the War. The anti-Catholicism that was applied to materialism showed its intrinsic hollowness and sham. Face to face with death men turned instinctively to belief in God. Before such an ordeal as flying shot and shell it was impossible to be an atheist.

There is no record of a Catholic who lost his faith on account of the War, but there are many examples of careless Catholics reconciled to their Church, and examples innumerable of non-Catholics who turned to the Catholic chapel for encouragement in spiritual things that they felt were so necessary. There has consequently been a strong revival of faith in God and in Christ, although outside the Catholic Church this belief as yet lacks much definite idea about Christ and about His doctrines. But it may be taken as a groping for truth that will find its object in time.

Another hopeful sign whose significance should not be allowed to pass is the recent celebration in such a Protestant country as England on Armistice Day. At this historic function there was a Memorial Service, placing flowers on the Cenotaph, bringing home the Unknown Warrior, and prayers at his bier. A few years ago the offerings of prayers at such events would have been regarded as Catholic superstition. Today it is taken by non-Catholics to evince their rejection of the materialistic notion that this life is everything, and ends everything, and their growing conviction born of the War that when their best and dearest relatives go forth and die for a cause there must be something more than death. Coupled with the spontaneous impulse to fall upon their knees and pray for the well being of their departed heroes, this is a close approximation of the Catholic doctrine of the future life.

Catholics have seized the opportunity to pray that Almighty God will remind the people of the world through the Unknown Warrior of their duty of praying for others who are nameless and forgotten, and bring them by this road back to other doctrines of His Church. As a time when so much pessimism abounds it is refreshing to see such evidence of a return to doctrines of the old religion. We too have a duty to perform. We should pray for our separated brethren, that the lessons of the War may not be lost, that they may return step by step along the darkened way that leads to light, and that the problem of reunion of the scattered flock into one sheepfold may be accomplished. Such a giant cataclysm as the War could not pass without a spiritual awakening. God will allow us to see more evidence of its speedy approach, but let us not be unmindful or ungrateful of the signs already vouchsafed us.—The Pilot.

A SOLEMN REMINDER

Here is a solemn reminder from Cardinal Newman, who bids us remember that "Another year is opening upon us; it speaks to the thoughtful, and is heard by those who have expectant ears, and watch for Christ's Coming. The former year is gone: it is dead; there it lies in the grave of past time, not to deny, however, and be forgotten; but kept in the view of God's Omniscience, with all its sins and errors irrevocably written: till at length, it will be raised again to testify against us at the Last Day." This last is a terrible thought, well calculated to give us pause.

NECESSITY OF VOCATIONS

The necessity of fostering religious vocations is realized by all good Catholics. It is not enough, however, to pray that the laborers in the Lord's vineyard be plentiful, but we ought to do our part to help worthy young men who aspire to the priesthood; and parents ought to be willing to allow a son or daughter to consecrate his or her life to God.—The Messenger, San Antonio.

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