

chaunted with the simplicity and abruptness with which this good Father received him. "If you are sure you are in earnest I will instruct you, but if you are not, you had better stay as you are, for you would be worse damned as a bad Catholic."

Now that McMaster had, at length, overcome all obstacles, (that is, all that had swayed him; in the conquest of his own heart, his ardent impulsive nature was impatient of the happy moment which would admit him to the one true fold.

Fr. Rumpler gave him at first the small catechism. He returned with it the next morning, assuring him that he knew it from cover to cover. But the good Father perhaps to try him only shook his head and said: "What you learn so fast, you forget just so fast," and insisted on his studying it longer.

McMaster was received into the church on the eve of Corpus Christi, which fell that year, 1845, on the 8th of June. He could not have the happiness of being even conditionally baptised, but judging from his own expressions with regard to himself at that time, his soul must have been well cleansed by his hearty sorrow for the sins of his whole life, of which he of course made a general confession.

"While he was kneeling at the altar, candle in hand, piously reading his profession of faith to Father Rumpler, he accidentally set fire to Father Tschenhens' hair, one of the fathers who assisted at the ceremony. Walking together afterwards in the little garden of the convent, Father Rumpler said to him: 'Mr. McMaster, you begin well, setting fire to a priest.' 'Oh,' answered he, 'if I don't set fire to something more than that, it will be a pity.'"—*Catholic World, Feb., 1891.*

He received his first communion the next day. The certificate of his reception into the church and of his first communion were found among his private papers.

McMaster took in Confirmation the name Alphonsus, and dropped the "a" in "Mac," thinking McMaster more Catholic. Hence he was known as Jas. A. McMaster.

In the midst of his great spiritual joy, his poor heart had much to suffer. A most touching interview—of which unfortunately there appears no written record—occurred at this time between himself and his father. On becoming an Episcopalian, McMaster

had been cut off by his family. They regarded him with much sorrow as an outcast, who had deserted the faith which they firmly believed to be the only true one. But now that he had become a papist, the poor father's heart smote him, lest his harsh treatment of his son, had led him into what he held to be the worst of all creeds. He feared at the same time that his son was somewhat demented in taking such a step. Accordingly, in spite of his age and infirmities, he undertook the then tedious journey to New York City, seeking for this son who was lost to him. The night before meeting him he spent at the house of a friend, and McMaster learned afterwards, that they had overheard him through the long silent hours, groaning and murmuring to himself, "Oh, my son! My son!" On approaching his son the next day the father was much moved, and said to him: "*My poor boy, come home with me!*" "Father," replied young McMaster, "you believe I am crazy." Then followed a long interview, during the course of which, young McMaster declared in loving words, that he owed his present happiness to him, his father, who had taught him from his earliest years to seek after truth and justice and holiness. This was their last meeting on earth. Letters passed between them. His father's were written in a dignified and elevated style, penetrated with a deep religious spirit. He sighed over his poor "erring boy"—bitterly reproached him that he was the sorrow of his old age—that all he had ever desired for him was that he might be holy.

Of the difficulties which McMaster had to overcome in becoming a Catholic, he says in his editorial of March 1, 1879:

"Thirty-four years ago, from the 8th of June coming, by the free grace of God, I became a Catholic. I had, two months before, the regard and companionship of many that were of the most cultivated and charming of the quiet old New Yorkers of that time. The promises of those, too honorable to break them, and too well established not to have been able fully to complete them, were offered me, if I would give up my purpose of becoming a Catholic, and pursue the profession of the law, for which I had made my studies. Partly by an inherited disregard of wealth as a condition of happiness, but, mostly, by the grace of our Lord, procured, I think, by prayers of some that knew of me, though I knew not them, I became a Catholic, in