

However, when they had come from the chapel and were at the breakfast table where—in honor of the feast of the Holy Angels, luscious baked apples with whipped cream and hot raisin and cinnamon rolls, Johnny Redhead aroused the seemingly conquered feeling.

"Gee, Bill, it's a great day for a mother and a father!" Of course, Johnny Redhead was rebuked for using "Gee," and for talking with his mouth full, but Billy-boy grinned. It was a great day.

Doubtless to show what it could do, the vanished summer, which had been for the greater part, rainy and cold, lavished all of its legacy of sweetness and loveliness upon this day. Never had the sun shone more brightly. Never were there bluer skies or greener grass or warmer breezes.

Billy-boy's heart leaped with joy. What a wonderful day it would be if, together with the crowning of the angel statue in the parade to which Billy-boy was to march just behind the big boy who was to perform the ceremony—the freedom dinner and supper, the two hours promised him to spend with Robert Emmet, and the big game of the season between St. William's and St. George's dormitories, would come a—But Billy-boy dared to think no further.

The hours passed swiftly as hours on a "free" day always do. Visitors came to the home, but no father or mother—these could be spotted as soon as they appeared.

Billy-boy became a trifle—oh merely a trifle!—disappointed. He nearly grew cross, too. Johnny Blackhead was the cause. It was a custom of the latter little boy to take his tablet, and opposite each letter in the alphabet to write the surnames he preferred. He had covered several sheets of paper and insisted, when Billy-boy and Johnny Redhead, at first mildly and later angrily, opposed the suggestion that "Johnny Blackhead Zabedehijklmnopqrstuvwxyz" was a possible name and one he wouldn't take a whole lot mind having for his own.

Then, in the ballgame, St. George's dormitory beat St. William's—Billy-boy's—by the mortifying score of 91 to 0! The day was already freighted with these cares when, just before dinner, when the cry went up, "Hey, fellows, there's a mother and a father! Hey, fellows!"

Billy-boy was going up to the dormitory to brush his hair and wash his face and hands, when he heard the excitement. For one agonizing moment his feet refused to carry him into the dormitory. He stood on the stairs, after that they worked faster than at any other time in his life. He flew into the dormitory. Oh, if only he had nice black hair and red cheeks and thick, straight eyebrows instead of sandy-colored hair and a freckled face and scarcely any brows at all! And if only his nose were straight, and if he hadn't lost two teeth yesterday, and if the third which had firmly declined to come out but which wiggled around and interfered with his talking, would fall out now!

Billy-boy plastered his hair into a ferocious looking pompadour, rubbed his cheeks hard with a bath-towel, and scrubbed his hands until they were sore. When he had finished he did not gaze at himself in the mirror. He hoped that he was better looking. He felt sure that he wasn't, but if he didn't actually know it, it wouldn't hurt so much. Anyway, who cared? If they took him it would be for himself.

He dashed up to the sun-room to tell Robert Emmet the news. But Sister Lucy, who was sitting there saying her rosary, held up a warning finger—Robert Emmet was asleep. Billy-boy saw that his pal's cheeks were wet and queerly white. Robert Emmet had had another of those awful spells and had been crying. Billy-boy went down the stairs, his enthusiasm almost gone. At the lowest step Sister Felice met him.

"Dear Billy-boy, I have been looking for you." Billy-boy clung passionately to her out-stretched hand.

"Sister Felice—Sister Felice, I am not going!" Sister Felice's brown eyes twinkled. "They haven't seen you yet, you know, Billy-boy!"

He felt his cheeks grow hot. "I—I love you, Sister Felice. If they ask me to go I won't!"

"Even if they have a house with long, wide bannisters and a rain-barrel?" Billy-boy, Sister Felice may not be at Holy Angels' next year. She would like to see her little boy settled with a nice father and mother who will love him as she does."

Billy-boy straightened his shoulders. "Well, I—I will speak to them anyway."

In the cheerful parlor, where Billy-boy had never gone except when it held no visitors, there rose to greet him, the very, very nicest father and mother who had ever come to Holy Angels'.

Billy-boy gazed at them silently. He nearly forgot to made his courteous little bow and take the hands they offered him.

"Well, you look pretty good to me," the man was saying.

Oh, what a fine, big man he was, and what friendly eyes he had, and what white teeth, and—no—yes, he had freckles!

"To me, too," Billy-boy turned to the woman. He had thought Lawrence Hoban's mother as sweet as a mother could be, but—why, he had never seen such lovely black hair and black eyes and pretty hands!

Sister Felice was speaking. "Billy-boy is very old for his years. He doesn't lie and he is very loyal. He's no coward, although I would not call him foolhardy. I think Billy-boy would make a very acceptable son, Mr. Clancey."

"Clancey! Bill Clancey!" Billy-boy trembled with delight. It was a dandy name!

"And, although I should prefer an invalid, Sister Felice, I think I shall take Billy. Of course, he doesn't resemble Buddy, but I rather like freckles."

She laughed softly, but it was a fearful little laugh. Billy-boy gazed wonderingly at her. She was almost crying! He recognized his duty.

"Have you got a rain-barrel and a fat, black cook who can make cookies?" he asked politely.

Mr. Clancey chuckled. "Well, son, we can import them; can't we, Irene?"

His wife nodded, her wet eyes aglow.

"You see, she turned to Sister Felice. "We are not exactly prepared for a strong little boy. Buddy's hospital room," he called it this—with all of the conveniences we could procure, is still waiting. I thought perhaps that you would have an invalid."

Billy-boy's racing thoughts were suddenly stemmed.

"What kind of an invalid?" His question was, as he knew, too abrupt. He felt Sister Felice's surprised looked upon him.

"Why—just a little boy who is sick—"

"One who doesn't lie or steal or swear?"

"Billy-boy dear!" He waved this aside impatiently.

Mr. Clancey intervened. "We don't want any boy who does those things, old man."

Billy-boy's heart responded to the comradely speech of this visiting father. Then the picture of Robert Emmet came to his mind—he never would forget his pal's white face all wet with tears.

"Sister Felice, you forgot Robert Emmet," he said gravely.

"Billy-boy!"

"An invalid, Sister?" inquired the eager Mrs. Clancey.

"Robert Emmet is my chum," Billy-boy hurried his words. He was afraid to look at Sister Felice.

"He's always in bed. His legs are crooked and his back is hurt and he cries and has funny spells nearly all the time. He isn't pretty but he's better looking than I am and—and better looking than a man and—and complete question of his soul, if he has one."

The next step will embody the proof of the existence of a personal God and a spiritual soul which must answer an account to this self-same God.

If then God exists and shares the sentiments which we know are the highest of our complex nature—i. e., love and regard for the welfare of our fallen creatures,—this God must be interested in us, at least to some degree. Here is a vital step. If He has ever been and is now interested in me, John Smith, living in the city of Smithville, in the year 1915, has He ever manifested that interest in any way? Well, probably not by any private revelation. Few of us have been St. Paul's, sent with explicit instructions to Damascus.

If not personally then, has He ever sent a message to me written on the pages of history? I scan these pages. Yes, I find that, in the ages of the world, there have been many who have claimed to come from God with a message to humanity—from Moses and the prophets down through Buddha, Confucius, Simon, and countless others too numerous to mention—even to Mrs. Baker Eddy of the present generation. But pre-eminently this is unnecessary. We fix our historical personage demanding our immediate attention—the One known as Jesus Christ.

Of course, if we wish we may profoundly sound the credentials of each and every one of these in turn, but usually this is unnecessary. We fix our attention on Him, who by the results He has accomplished challenges our attention.

Who was He? By His actual works, which we can study from pure historical sources independently of faith, we find that God was with Him. If he were with Him in His works He was with Him in His words. What then had this man to say of Himself? He said that He was not only sent from God but was Divine Himself, and died to prove it. If divine, what He says goes. There can be no quibbling. His words are law. Upon Him, therefore, rests my all.

But He lived many years ago, and died. He is not with us to-day. I cannot go to Him personally. (Of course the Blessed Sacrament is not even mentioned as yet.) Is there any body of men, any society, and church which can tell me what He said and the rules He has laid down for me?

I look around me and,—yes, there are many such societies offering to teach me His words—in fact, over a hundred of them here in America alone. I pass down the street and building after building on those corner stones in some form or other is inscribed the title of "Christian."

I go within and find, to my astonishment and bewilderment, that they are not saying the same things. In fact, one says "yes" and another "no" to identically the same proposition. One tells me that He said very emphatically that there should be no such thing as divorce, another that He said there could be. I cannot,

THE LOGIC OF THE CONVERT

(By Rev. E. J. Mannix, in the Catholic Convert.)

It has often been asked by Catholics referring to the making of converts: "How is it done, and what are the steps in the minds of him who, from total or partial lack of faith, becomes a man of religion and of God?" In other words, "what is the process and the logic of the convert?"

In answer it might be said that no two conversions are exactly alike. From the philosophical conversion of the brother of G. K. Chesterton, down through what might be called the historical process of Newman, the Blessed Sacrament, light of Manning, the denominational pathway of Brownson, to the recent "military" return to the faith of Lavredau, the Frenchman,—one encounters types and shades of diverse hues—all leading to the same white light. But, in general, it can be said that the logic of the convert follows certain well defined lines, no matter what may have been the starting point, and it is of this logic I wish to write.

First and pre-eminently, the mind must be made to understand and the heart to feel that the "thing is worth while." This is a blunt way of saying that unless the prospective convert is fully cognizant of the importance—the absolute necessity—of religion in his daily life, future development can not be counted on—the case is hopeless.

To overcome indifference is the most difficult step of all—difficult, because the adult American has been confronted by every style and fashion of creed on every street corner of the town, and his general conclusion has been one of indifference to religion in any form.

In face of this situation the Catholic Church occupies a place most trying to elucidate to the stranger. The other day a man explained, as his reason for coming to see me, that he had arrived at the determination that he ought for decency's sake to belong to some church, and "might just as well be a Catholic as anything else." Of course, we could not proceed until the workings of the Church until this ground had been cleared away.

Suppose, however, that the inquirer has decided (on account of motives which we have not space to examine here), that absolutely nothing—business cares, family connections, health or anything else—shall stand in the way of a full and complete question of his soul, if he has one.

The next step will embody the proof of the existence of a personal God and a spiritual soul which must answer an account to this self-same God.

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THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

WHAT IT MEANS TO A CONVERT

By Margaret J. Porter in Extension Magazine

Catholicity gives me three things, none of which were, or could be, offered me by any Protestant sect. A Catholic possesses a faith which is acceptable to reason and, at the same time, is certainly and infallibly true: the Catholic Church has perfect unity of doctrine and practice; and last, but not least, Catholicity is a vital, personal, soul-satisfying religion.

I say that Catholicism is acceptable to reason because, before the divine gift of faith was given to me, all the doctrines and teachings of the Catholic Church seemed perfectly reasonable, once they were fully understood. Of course, if one accepts the teachings of the Catholic Church, one accepts, ipso facto, her teaching concerning the infallibility of the Sovereign Pontiff, and thus one is given a definite certain belief which is very different from the out of reason, Protestant sects. Any one who has been troubled in his or her own life by the dissensions and weaknesses of Protestantism is in a position to appreciate the feeling of security and peace given by a Church which claims to be—and is—a divinely appointed teacher.

But, still more than the certainty of faith, the unity of the Catholic Church appeals to me. Unity, I suppose, inseparable from infallibility. I had always thought that one of the chief weaknesses of Protestantism was its lack of unity. If we were all bound for the same goal; if we served the same God, and acknowledged one Saviour, why should we not be united in doctrine and teaching instead of being divided into innumerable sects? I was strongly attracted by the unity of the Catholic Church and, since I have been a Catholic, I have realized still more what a necessary and blessed thing is unity of faith.

If the Catholic Church satisfies my mind and reason by her unity and infallibility, she also satisfies in an even greater degree the desires and longings of my soul. Whether my sins are forgiven in the sacrament of penance; whether my soul is united to Our Blessed Lord in Holy Communion, or whether I am actually present at the unbloody sacrifice of Calvary, there is always the personal contact of Creator and creature.

When I was a Protestant, it always seemed to me to be rather unhumanly speaking—that Our Lord

was no longer on earth. The Jews of old had longed for Him and prayed for the Messias. They also had the special presence of God above the Cherubim of the Ark. Then for thirty-three years Our Lord was present on earth—but then He left earth, I thought.

I can not express what the belief in the Presence of the Blessed Sacrament in our tabernacles means and has meant to me during the eight years that I have believed in that Presence. For one thing, it means the satisfaction of a great longing, which had seemed impossible of fulfillment.

All this seems little when expressed in cold words. What does my religion mean to me? How can I say how much it means to me? When I left the uncertainty, gloom, unrest and chaos of a Protestant sect for the certainty, joy, peace and order of the Catholic Church, life began to have a new meaning for me. When I entered the Church, life began to be for me what it has always been since that time and what it never was before—a wonderful and beautiful thing, simply because I know now that Our Lord has not left us, but that He still abides with us in the Blessed Sacrament.

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ENGLAND'S CONVERSION

We are able to think that because we dream and sigh over the prospect of a Catholic England, therefore we are truly desiring the conversion of our country. But romantic dreaming is not the same thing as efficacious desire; to desire a thing seriously is to will it efficaciously, and one of the marks of an efficacious will is to be eager to put theories into practice, to leap into every breach, to drive a wedge into every crack.—Monsignor Benson.

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