

HOW A PREJUDICED MINISTER JOINED THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

The Catholic Church is constantly receiving a steady stream of Protestant ministers into her fold—men who often are married and who have been trained for nothing else but the ministry, yet who must give up the idea of continuing it because our clergy are celibates. Professor Charles W. Meyers, of San Antonio, Texas, U.S.A., is one of these converts (says the *Brooklyn Tablet* of April 26), and has written a pamphlet describing his experiences. It is regarded as one of the most valuable contributions to Catholic missionary literature in recent years. It is entitled *A Minister's Surrender: or, How Truth Conquered Prejudice*, and is published by *Our Sunday Visitor* Press, Huntington, Ind. He was born of Lutheran parents near Louisville, Ky.

"My very earliest religious impressions were intensely anti-Catholic. My parents taught me that the Catholic Church was an institution of the devil, and that all Catholic priests were the devil's agents," he says.

While born of Lutherans, he was reared in the Methodist Church, as there was no Lutheran Church around. He was ordained a Methodist preacher, but his belief became too "liberal" for this fold, so he joined the Congregationalists. He held Congregational and Presbyterian pulpits—a seeming inconsistency made consistent by the cordial relations between these Churches. He admits that his aversion to Catholicity was intensified "by the bitter anti-Catholic literature that charged the Catholic clergy with all sorts of beastly lust, and with murderous hatred towards all Protestants."

His first favorable impression of Catholicity came in a Protestant theological seminary, when he realised that Protestants had only fragmentary and unconvincing explanations of why the books that make up the Bible should be there. Asked about these proofs, his professor said, "Yes, these are all the proofs that Protestants have, but the Catholics claim that the canonicity of the New Testament books was settled by the infallible Councils of the Church." The convert says: "At once I was impressed with the direct force of this Catholic proof, and felt it to be the only satisfactory one. There came also the associated thought that if the Church, by Divine authority, fixed the limits of the Bible, then she must also be superior to the Bible. The authority which determined what was Scripture, and what was not Scripture, seemed to me to be the Supreme Divine authority."

The minister, ten years later, came across Father Searle's *Plain Facts for Fair Minds* in a hotel reading-room. Its effect on him was "enlightening, chastening, and pacifying." He says: "I discovered one fact after another about which I had always been grossly misinformed. I found excellence and beauty where I had expected to find defect and deformity. When I laid the book aside, my antagonism to Catholicity was subdued, and my hatred was pacified." What an argument for Catholic literature!

This book, while not convincing the minister, allayed all his prejudice. He ceased to refer to himself as a "Protestant." He preferred the "more generous name of non-Catholic." But he got into dangerous religious mires. He read great quantities of Unitarian literature and delved into higher criticism, so that he was on the verge of paganism.

About this time, the great anti-Catholic wave of a few years ago started. The minister determined to investigate the anti-Catholic charges thoroughly. He heard "ex-Priest" Crowley lecture and discovered him "to be a profuse dispenser of gross, unproved assertions about Catholicity." He also heard the editor of the *Menace* and found that he "was merely catering to religious prejudice by giving utterance, both in speech and print, to the most outlandish and untruthful statements about the Catholic Church." One day Mr. Meyers found a piece of *Our Sunday Visitor* lying

in the dirt. He sent for a copy and got others at times, being put in touch with interesting literature. Father Noll, the editor, sent him a number of books, too. Looking up the *Congressional Record* to find out about the alleged bloody Knights of Columbus' oath, he found, as the bigots had charged, that the publication did contain the oath, but for an entirely different reason than they had said. It was there "simply to expose it and condemn it as spurious. The wily anti-Catholic editor had purposely deceived his readers by simply telling them the half truth that this awful oath was recorded in the *Congressional Record* . . . and this disgraceful trick is only one out of a number of the same sort."

The thing that finally led the minister into the Catholic Church was a deep study of the Reformation. He was particularly struck by finding that it was an out-and-out falsehood of Protestantism that Luther "found" the Bible and gave it to the people. Luther himself never at any time claimed to have made any such accidental discovery of the Bible, but on the other hand, distinctly states that he had been accustomed to reading the Bible from his very childhood. So says Mr. Meyers, and he gives the quotation from Luther's *Tischreden*. Melancthon, Luther's co-worker, also says that in his youth the Bible was much more extensively read by young men than it was after the Reformation. Protestant scholars of high standing are quoted to the same effect.

And so the minister goes on in this memorable little pamphlet, proving how, step by step, he found that the Catholic Church was the exact opposite of the vile thing his good, but mistaken parents had believed her to be, and was the very Church of Jesus Christ, True God and True Man.

THE GREY MAGICIAN.

I was living very merrily on Middle Earth,
As merry as a maid may be,
Till the Grey Magician came down along the road
And flung his cobweb cloak on me:

His cobweb cloak of grey brushed my eyes and my ears,
And all the curtained air was thinned,
And I came to the sight of the quiet Other People
Who live in the water and the wind:

And I cannot go abroad to gather up the faggots,
Singing to the honest air
Because of the fingers of the brown wood-women
Catching at my blowing hair:

And I cannot sit at home and be quiet at my spinning,
Singing to the thread I spin,
Because of the crying of the green sea-women
Beneath my sill to be let in:

And I wish the Grey Magician had been swung to an oak
Or drowned in the deep green sea
Before he brushed my face with his cobweb cloak
And stole the Middle Earth from me!

—MARGARET WIDDEMER, in *Current Opinion*.

We direct attention to the change of advertisement of E. O'Connor, Catholic Book Depot, Barbadoes Street, Christchurch. Included in the list of new books we notice the *Codex Juris Canonici; Practical Aspects* (new code) of *Canon Law; Marriage Legislation* (new code—Ayrinhac); *Religious Profession* (Papi, S.J.), and several other equally valuable editions. An enthronement picture, combined with Act of Consecration to the Sacred Heart, is also advertised.

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