



25

W.C.

B. Wiedan







THE  
LAST MOMENTS  
OF  
A CONVERTED INFIDEL.

---

The mercies of the Lord I will sing for ever.

*Psal. lxxxviii. 8.*

Behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me  
blessed.

*St. Luke, i. 48.*

---

BY THE REV. J. P. DONELAN.

---

BALTIMORE:  
METROPOLITAN PRESS.  
1846.

ACA 3961

---

ENTERED according to the Act of Congress, in the year eighteen hundred and forty-six, by LOUIS REGIS DELUOL, in the Clerk's office of the District Court of Maryland.

---

Deacidified



TO THE  
VENERABLE AND VERY

**REV. DR. MATTHEWS,**  
THE PATRIARCH OF CATHOLICITY

IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA,

The Orphan's Father and the Widow's Friend,  
this little work is affectionately inscribed by

THE WRITER.



## PREFACE.



IN presenting the following pages to the public, it may not be amiss to premise, that they are intended merely to convey facts as they really occurred, without any attempt at explanation or vindication of the various dogmas of the Catholic religion to which they have reference. The writer has preferred to let facts speak for themselves—trusting rather to their interest and influence

than to any effort of his own. In the inspired words of the "Disciple whom Jesus loved," *That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have diligently looked upon, and our hands have handled. . . . That which we have seen and heard we declare unto you—that you also may have fellowship with us, and our fellowship may be with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things we write unto you that you may rejoice—and your joy may be full.* 1 S. John, i, 1, 3, 4.

If the writer has sometimes used strong expressions, his pen has but traced the feelings of his heart. For all that is herein related, he holds

himself responsible. Willing to render to him that asketh it, a reason for the faith that is in him.

With the subject of this narrative, who had for many years previously to his death resided in Alexandria, D. C., the writer had no acquaintance prior to his introduction to him in his sick room. They, however, who knew him well, speak of him as one long known as an avowed enemy to Christianity. In his childhood he had been baptized in the Catholic church by the venerable Father Francis Neale, of the Jesuit Order; and had his education equalled his naturally strong mind, the evil which he might have inflicted on society would be incalculable.

Providentially, however, such was not the case. Born of poor parents, in early youth he acquired only the simplest rudiments of education; and his after life afforded few opportunities for supplying this deficiency. Uncompromising in his principles, and a shrewd observer of men and things, he enjoyed the confidence and respect of many. For one in his humble sphere of life, he exerted no inconsiderable influence, as all believed that however erroneous his principles on religious subjects and energetic his manner of expressing them, he was sincere. The truly sensible will respect the honest errors of another, even while they seek to disprove them.

The reader will perceive that not unfrequently, in the following pages, the Invocation of Saints and Angels, the Intercession of the B. V. Mary, Praying for the dead, and the Real Presence of our Blessed Lord in the Holy Communion are introduced. If the writer has not stopped to prove these various doctrines, it is through an unwillingness to interrupt the thread of the narrative. Under other circumstances, it would perhaps be a duty, as it would assuredly be a pleasure to enter upon these subjects at length.

With these reflections, this little work goes forth, to seek its varied fortune. To God and to his Blessed Mother it is commended. May it

tend to awaken in the minds of some who read it, a desire to seek repose in the bosom of that holy Church, which alone can impart true comfort here—true happiness hereafter.

ST. MATTHEW'S CHURCH, }  
*City of Washington, D. C.* }







THE LAST MOMENTS  
OF  
A CONVERTED INFIDEL.

---

THE remarkable conversion which we are about to relate, will be viewed, doubtless, by many as a mere human affair—an effect of sudden impulse or fanaticism. There are those into whose hands these pages will fall, who will treat the whole matter lightly, and pass it by as another fiction; and perhaps censure the writer for giving the facts to the public. But there are higher and holier motives for proclaiming to the world

this striking proof of God's mercy. In giving publicity to this wonderful conversion, in stating minutely each fact as it transpired and every circumstance attending the conversion of Mr. McGraw, the writer is guided by a fervent wish to promote the glory of God; to show forth his mercies and to proclaim his goodness. He desires to show to the world the efficacy of prayer—of the intercession of the Saints and Angels of God—and first, and above them all, of Mary, the ever blessed and immaculate Mother of God. What the thoughtless or the prejudiced may think or say of his efforts, the writer neither heeds nor cares; for conscious of the truth of what he

states, and impelled by no other aim than to glorify the wondrous ways of God, he sends forth this little work to seek its way into the hands of all. If any censure, so let it be—if any approve, let them thank that Father in Heaven who continues to manifest his mercies in such wondrous ways. If these facts shall be read by any who love and venerate the Blessed Mother of God, they will serve to strengthen that filial trust in her protection. With the subject of this narrative, let such exclaim: “Would that every heart were filled with love for Mary, the refuge of sinners and the Mother of my God!” It is to give an additional motive for this devotion that

the following pages are written— let them be read attentively, for the writer, as well as numerous other eye-witnesses, is ready to substantiate every circumstance here related.

Mr. McGraw, at the time our narrative commences, was confined to his room by the illness of which he subsequently died. His body was exceedingly emaciated while his mind remained strong and vigorous. All who ever heard him declaim against Revealed Religion, or who knew him during his days of health agree in pronouncing him a man of unusually strong argumentative powers. In the District of Columbia, where Mr. McGraw was most known, his views on the subject of Religion

need not be mentioned. They are as familiar to his acquaintances, and indeed to a great portion of the District as the history of any fact. During a long and eventful life, he had for forty years openly professed himself an Infidel—had gloried in the wild and senseless theories of Voltaire, of Rousseau, of Paine, Diderot, D'Alembert, Bollingbroke and Kneeland. Following in the track of such demoralizing leaders, his naturally strong intellect succeeded to no inconsiderable extent, in compiling a system partaking of the inconsistencies of one, the absurdities of another, and the horrid blasphemies of all. This system he had openly professed and strenuously endeavored

to inculcate during five and thirty years. Possessed of an inventive genius and a fluency of words, it is not to be wondered at, that few were found to enter the arena of dispute with him—for, to convince him was impossible, so strongly was he wedded to his own peculiar views. Not an apparent discrepancy in the Bible had escaped him; no difficulty, no seeming contradiction or prophecy in either the Old or New Testament but was as familiar to him as the Commandments to a Christian. He had studied the sacred volume for the express purpose of culling such passages; and most fearful was the use which he made of his ill-directed talent. The strongest arguments



and most plausible theories against the truths of the gospel, Mr. McGraw would set forth in his intercourse with the young men, many of whom looked upon him as their leader in infidelity. He was for several years accustomed, after the duties of the day were over, to argue against the Christian religion in presence of an assemblage of persons, who would gather around his door or in some public place, attracted by the bold originality of his manner, and by the novelty of his views. It was his chief aim to instil his principles in the minds of the young; and too fatally did he for years succeed! Many corrupted by his irreligious teaching are now suffering the dread

consequences—many there are who, during the long period of thirty or forty years, learned from him to blaspheme the God of Truth and to deny his sacred revelations!—Some remain here, and others are scattered to different parts of the world—while, how shall it be said! no few have already passed the confines of time, and are now in eternity! ¶ It was long, and indeed the constant custom of Mr. McGraw, to seek interviews with the sick and the dying; and there, while performing some friendly office, to distil the poison of his infidelity into the very soul of the death-stricken victim! No Christian minister could be more zealous for good than was this mis-

guided individual in disseminating his horrid principles. Strange infatuation! frightful wanderings of the human intellect! And yet, the writer of this narrative entertains not the slightest doubt of Mr. McGraw's sincerity. He had become impressed with the belief, that all religious authority was an unauthorized restraint on human liberty—that the mind of man should tower above all dependance on others for guidance; and being naturally of an ardent temperament and possessing a heart ever sensibly alive to the necessities of others, he considered it his duty to destroy, as far as possible, the results of religious education in those around him—hence his unceasing exertions

against revealed Religion, and his equally strenuous efforts to elevate human reason to the throne of the Deity. Against his character in a moral point of view no one could speak—a kind father, he labored to support his family, and reared them in respectability—in nothing but religion was he opposed to them—and strange as it may seem to some, he was not opposed to his childrens' joining the Catholic Church. While he was willing for them to enjoy their own opinions, he required that they should never introduce, in his presence the subject of religion; and if perchance in an unguarded moment, or when they beheld him slowly sinking beneath the effects of disease,

they introduced the subject, it would serve but to elicit from the father a tirade against the professors and the doctrines of revelation.

During the spring of 1846, Mr. McGraw was attacked with a severe bronchial affection, which in a few months proved fatal. His once robust and hardy constitution rapidly yielded to the inroads of disease—while trusting with apparent and no doubt sincere reliance to his erroneous principles,—he looked on death as the termination of all his sufferings. To the earnest entreaties of his family and friends, whenever they ventured to broach the subject of preparing for death, he would reply in his usual style—assuring all

of his perfect resignation, of his trust and entire confidence in the God whom he worshipped, of his willingness to abide the consequences of his belief, and his settled conviction of the truth of his opinions on the subject of Rational Religion. Many visited him during this period of his illness; and no few were hindered from speaking on pious subjects through a natural, and very justifiable dread of exciting him against religion. So excitable were his feelings and vehement his manner on this point, that not unfrequently in disproving Christianity and supporting his own views he would become speechless from fatigue. The few who ventured to introduce the sub-

ject of religion succeeded in nothing but in calling forth his reiterated opposition; and a renewal of his entire confidence in the sufficiency of reason and morality for man's security. When questioned on the immortality of the soul, on his prospects beyond the grave or his views of eternity, he would reply that a future state was absurd—that the soul's immortality was a mere fiction, and that the doctrine of future rewards and punishments was the offspring of designing legislators. Nothing seemed capable to alter his views on these points. Christianity he treated as a fable—the history of its divine founder was but one of the many chimeras by which the human mind was

enslaved—the sacred truths contained in the written word of God were but ill arranged contradictions, while reason was the only Deity; and was alone deserving of man's adoration.

9 On one occasion in reply to the repeated request of a pious Catholic lady for permission to introduce a priest into his room, he replied with emphasis: "Not only one, but a host of priests, that they may see how an infidel can die!" Such were his feelings, and such the vain boastings of this child of error. "See how an infidel can meet death," was his frequent remark, and when, on another occasion, he was exhorted to think of the frightful eternity into which he was about enter, he replied



with apparently much sincerity, “that change which you call eternity, but which I call the simple dissolution of all human organization, has no terror for me—I am not afraid to die, for that ends all my sufferings and all my being. No Christian can meet death with less of fear, than I now see its slow but sure progress.”

Eternal God! how frightful such sentiments! As he himself remarked when afterwards suing for mercy at the foot of the cross! how vague and undefined is the idea an infidel forms of the state beyond the grave! No faith enlivens the dreary blank, the horrid gloom brooding over the last moment! no gleam of cheering hope dispels the dread, the fearful doubt

which must sometimes rack the infidel's soul, despite the boasted security which lends a seeming but a fatal calmness! No heaven born charity points the spirit above, nor lifts up the soul upon the wings of prayer, as looking from the window of the eyes it gazes on the past, the present or the future! but all is gloom, is wild and cheerless doubt!

Ah! who can believe it is all of death to die? Who can place his hand upon his heart and say he is prepared to meet that change which knows no change? To set out upon that perilous journey; which ends—where? “The chamber where the good man meets his fate” may indeed be called the dwelling place of

angels, for it is there the gates of a happy eternity are opened to him—it is there the vision of the heavenly Jerusalem first bursts upon his view, and the spirits of God welcome home another soul ransomed by the blood of the Lamb. But no such cheering truths cluster around the dying infidel. No angel is there to point the doubting and the trembling soul to a better world. No bright visions of God and of his angels open to his view. No star of hope rises mid the storm, to guide the wanderer home, or cheer the desponding spirit in that awful gloom—all is dark and frightful uncertainty—all is doubt, and though the departing one may still persist, his perseverance can arise

from nothing else than wilful obstinacy or a frightful yet well merited judgment of God. Child of error, stay thy wayward course! Change thy wicked thoughts while yet lingering this side the grave! If so it be that God may still pardon thee—But if thou will not, and persevere in thy infidelity, one step more, and all is lost forever! One awful moment and forever it will be too late! No return—no change—no hope! Lo! even now the angels of God are waiting for thee! See! from the happy shores of Canaan they are beckoning to thee. Thy God waits for thy return. Thy Saviour lives to make intercession for thee. Thou hast a mother in heaven, the mother

of God who pleads to her Divine Son for thee! and the recording Angel is ready at heaven's command to blot forever thy faults from the register of death! "Why will ye perish, O house of Israel?" "As I live, saith the Lord, I will not the death of the sinner, but rather that he be converted and live." "Turn to me, O Israel, and though thy sins be as red as scarlet, I will make them white as snow"—"Oh house of Israel why will ye die!"

Praised and glorified forever, be the mercies of our God, who was pleased to manifest these consoling assurances so openly and so wonderfully to the subject of our narrative! What but the power of

God could so effectually operate the change which filled men and angels with joy? But to resume our subject. Yielding to the request of the afflicted family, a Catholic clergyman from a neighboring city, having previously been invited by the resident clergyman of the parish, visited Mr. McGraw. Not unaware of the peculiar circumstances of the case, and being an entire stranger to the sick man, the clergyman had no other resource than to recommend the object of his mission to the special care of God, through the hands of Mary, the Blessed Mother of our Lord. This he did—and the result proved that the Church is guided by a

spirit of truth when she so sweetly addresses the Mother of God as "The Refuge of sinners." On being introduced into the room, he found the sick man reclining in a chair, apparently much exhausted from conversation. The sufferer reached forth his hand, and feebly, yet with much apparent earnestness, welcomed his visitor. There was no violence of feeling manifested by Mr. McGraw during this, nor indeed during any of the subsequent visits, made by the Catholic clergyman. On this occasion, the subject of religion was not introduced.—They spoke of various topics—of questions of history, of the leading political and stirring events of the

day—and after the lapse of an hour, the clergyman retired. || Nothing of any particular interest marked this visit or the time which intervened between it and the following one. It is but just to remark that the resident clergyman of the place had previously visited the sick man, and was received by him in the same friendly manner—and although the efforts of that zealous priest met with no encouragement on the part of Mr. McGraw—although to all the tender invitations of religion, and its most appalling truths he replied in his usual manner, we may confidently believe that those visits had their good effect. During those interviews, we may safely say, the



good seed was planted, which subsequently fructified a thousand fold. On one occasion, in his remarks to that Rev. gentleman, Mr. McGraw used language which he immediately regretted—for although deeply wedded to his own views, he seldom forgot when in conversation with clergymen the respect due them.—How earnestly did he afterwards ask pardon of God and of this good priest, for this offence! And may we not hope that, as the words produced no other feeling on the mind of the clergyman than pity for the momentary forgetfulness that caused them, kind heaven heard them not—or hearing them, excused them.

One week passed between the

first and second visits of the stanger clergymen. During the interval how fervently was the prayer of faith put up to the throne of grace for this lost one of the tribe of Israel! Christians of various denominations united in supplicating God in his behalf.—All felt an interest in his conversion—for all had known and sorrowed over his errors.—The Sisters of Charity gathered their orphan charge around the shrine of Mary, and taught them to pray for him.—The pure and fervent prayer went up from cloistered innocence—and the matin and the evening office was chaunted in his behalf.—The spotless Lamb was immolated on the altar to plead for mercy and

for pardon for this wandering child of error.—For all knew that the Lord loveth mercy—and heareth the cry of the swallow for food.—All knew that ~~his~~ his mercies endureth from end to end—and his goodness even unto everlasting.—Cheering thought! Consoling truth! How wonderful are thy ways, Oh! God of our fathers! How great thy mercies!—how exalted thy views! Let heaven and earth proclaim thy glory!—And let all that is within us and around us bless thy holy name! ~~How~~ How omnipotent is prayer! What can it not operate! From what dangers of soul and of body can it not rescue man! How often was the arm of God, already up-

lifted to strike the rebellious Jews, held back by the prayers of Moses, or permitted to fall only in blessings upon his people ! The troubled waters roll back their sullen waves and serve as sentinels to cover the retreat of the Israelites ; and again, at the prayer of Moses, the sea, the earth and elements, are embattled against the hosts of Pharaoh ! The flinty rock gives forth its gushing streams to cool the travellers in the wilderness. The brazen serpent is an instrument of mercy—and the prayer of faith is answered by manna from heaven ! A mother's prayer is heard in heaven, as Agar weeps for her boy Ismael in the wilderness of Bersabee—for her child is faint—

and she cannot bear to see him die—she turns in anguish from him, and lifting up her voice she weeps. Oh! the power of prayer! It brought an angel from heaven in that hour of trial, and the miraculous waters bring back to life the drooping form of her boy Ismael. David sinned—Magdalen was a sinner—and the thief upon the cross was guilty.—Yet the supplications of the one stayed the avenging sword of justice—the tears of the “sinful Mary” blotted out her offences—and paradise was the reward of the good thief’s prayer! It was this consoling assurance that encouraged the good to pray for Mr. McGraw. The charity of God urged them—they hoped—

and thanks be to God! they did not hope in vain.

Whatever the motives by which he was actuated, whether the grace of God had already begun to operate in his heart, or through mere human motives, as personal regard, certain it is that Mr. McGraw expressed his surprise during the week that the strange clergyman had not again called. How natural it is for man at all times to love sympathy! But it is particularly in sickness, in suffering, and in trials, that kindness and attention are appreciated. A kind expression, a gentle look, or a word of sympathy, is never entirely useless—would that it were more common! It was very

probably this motive that actuated Mr. McGraw in asking why his Rev. visitor stayed so long away. It was for this precisely, the clergyman was waiting—most anxiously had he watched the current of affairs, and enquired of all who could inform him, the result of his first, apparently, accidental visit—and on being informed of the enquiry on the part of his patient, no time was lost in repairing to his bed-side.

Behold him then, a second time in the sick man's room. How anxiously every throb of his heart beats with earnest, yet half-doubting hope! The invalid smiles a welcome—and presses his hand in token of its sincerity. Not yet one word of reli-

gion is introduced. The approaching end of all his sufferings—the calmness and fortitude with which a disciple of reason can die—and the beautiful order of nature, which teaches the young to provide for the old, the strong to protect the weak—and the departing to look to an honest name, and the tranquillity of the grave as the reward of a good life—such was the theme of his conversation. ~~And~~ And, as he proceeded, it must have been evident to all, that he was sincere. He remarked how different was his situation, calm, collected, and prepared, from the death of many professing Christians whom he had known. They seemed terrified and appalled at the gloom



of the grave, and what they foolishly believed, the judgment-seat of God,—while he, and as he spoke he placed his hand on his heart and raised himself in bed, could look on death with calm composure—and smile at its approach. For him there were no fears of judgment—for his God was always with him. Reason, free, untrammelled reason, was the only deity in whom he believed. There was no other God, no judgment-seat, but the tribunal of man's own conscience! He expressed in unbounded terms his pity for the deluded followers of “priestcraft,” as he styled revelation,—and lauded to the skies the ennobling principles of “The Age of Reason.” The

voluminous books of Voltaire, were a fortress for the protection of human rights—while the other heroes of infidelity were the true apostles of mind—the supporters of truth against the inroads of error!

It seemed impossible to change the current of conversation. Whatever was said, he would turn to the advantage of his opinions. Many little stratagems were used to effect this purpose, but all in vain. To oppose him, or to argue against his views, was only to excite him to still more frightful language, or to irritate his feelings and thus thwart the desired object. Silence, or even an apparent acquiescence in as much of his opinion as was not too evi-

dently opposed to divine truth, was the only means left to follow. After an hour or more passed in this manner, the clergyman, who had during the time whispered many a silent prayer to heaven in his behalf, requested to be left alone with the sick man. All present looked amazed. They obeyed, apparently unconscious of what they were doing. The clergyman closed the door, and, advancing towards the sick man's bed, gazed for a moment at him, then threw himself upon his knees as he leaned with extended arms towards him. "Unfortunate man," exclaimed the priest, "why do you continue to outrage the mercies of God? Think of that awful eternity

before you! Think of that God whom you blaspheme and deny—but who has sent me here to save you from ruin?” “There is no God for the Christian,” angrily replied the infidel, “you have no God.” “There is a God,” the clergyman replied, still kneeling: “And he sends me here to day. Let me ask his mercy for you?”

“Fool then, as you are,” said he, as the fire flashed fearfully from his eyes, “Fool then, as you are, pray—but pray loud, or else your bible God will not hear you.” The priest lifted up his eyes to heaven, and thought of HER, the refuge of sinners—the Mother of God: and he prayed for mercy through the

hands of Mary. The lovely words of St. Bernard gushed from his heart and from his lips. And the prayer went up: "Remember," &c. ~~E~~ternal God! how sudden a change comes over the sick man's soul! While yet pronouncing the words of the prayer, a stifled groan is heard—a sigh, as if from the very soul—and, at the close of the "Remember," as the priest looked towards him for whom he had been praying, what were his feelings, what his surprise to find him shedding tears, his hands clasped in prayer, and to hear these expressive words: "Mary, standing at the foot of the cross of Jesus, pray for me! Jesus, God! have mercy on me!"

Surprised and alarmed, the clergyman gazed upon the scene. But a moment passed, and he was clasped in the sick man's arms. A flood of tears was streaming from his eyes—his countenance was changed—sorrow and joy, grief and hope were blended there—a mild and gentle calm had replaced the stern, determined look which had characterized him through life—and a smile of delight beamed through all his tears. “Oh God of mercy!” he exclaimed, “what have I done to deserve this favor at thy hands? Jesus, Saviour! my Lord and my God, what is this? Oh! heaven of heavens! and all that they contain, thank my Saviour for me! Oh Mary, stand-

ing at the foot of the cross of Jesus, pray for me! Oh Jesus, dying on the cross for me, have mercy on me! Oh Mother of God, pray for me! My mother, the refuge of sinners, and the cause of my salvation, thank my God for me! Oh angel that has always been with me, thank my Saviour for me!" These and many similar aspirations proclaimed the wondrous change effected in Mr. McGraw. "And is it possible," asked the clergyman, "that God has manifested his mercies to you so wonderfully?" "Yes father," replied the happy convert: "Yes, I feel a change in all my views. From the moment you commenced that prayer, I seemed trans-

ported out of myself—God has been pleased to show me my error. The blessed mother of my Saviour seemed to stand before me—and with a mild countenance point to her divine Son, upon the cross beside her. I looked, and Jesus, my Saviour, smiled upon me—and I could not repress my feelings as I cried out, "Oh Mary, standing at the foot of the cross of Jesus, pray for me! Oh Jesus, dying on the cross for me, have mercy on me!" "Since this is so," said the priest, with tears of joy, "let us return thanks to our good God for his mercy and his goodness." "Do so, do so, father," rejoined the sick man, "Do so, and I will unite with all



my strength." And the priest knelt, and recited in thanksgiving to God, the Te Deum, the litanies of Jesus, and of the B. V. Mary. What a joyous scene! How fervently did they pray—the converted infidel, and the priest of religion! How earnest the petitions, how sincere the aspirations, how strong the faith of the recent convert! "Have mercy on me!" would he reply, as the petition went up to Jesus his Redeemer; with eyes turned towards heaven, and hands uplifted, while every feature of his countenance glowed with love and hope commingled with fear: "Have mercy on me, Oh Jesus! have mercy on me! Mother of God,

my mother, pray for me! Look upon your child! He owes his salvation to your prayers with Jesus for him. O Blessed Mother, look upon me! Thou knowest that I love thy Divine Son, but do you love him for me. Would that every heart were filled with love for Mary, the refuge of sinners and the Mother of my God!" He earnestly entreated to be permitted to make his confession immediately, but fearful that the excitement of the past few moments might be injurious to him, the clergyman proposed to delay the confession for a while in order to leave him alone to commune with his God. But much to his surprise, he found that Mr. McGraw was as calm and

tranquil as a child. There was a total change not only in feeling and in mind, but in appearance and in action. There was indeed an earnestness of expression; but it was as calmly dignified as if from long reflection. There was indeed a glow upon his cheek, and joy sparkling in his eye—but it was the smile of gratitude to God—and the eye bespoke the settled feelings of the heart. So earnest were his wishes to be allowed to make forthwith his confession, that the clergyman consented. What the fervor and contrition which marked that penitential act it is not ours to know. It is locked up in the impenetrable gloom of the past; but may we not hope

that He who has entrusted to his Church the power of binding and of loosening in the court of conscience ratified in heaven the ministrations of his representative here below?

Who can express the joy, the wonder of the family, when, on calling them into the room, they for the first time discovered the change that had been operated! Tears, and sighs, and expressions of amazement were heard from all sides—"Come to my arms, my children," he exclaimed, as he embraced them most affectionately, "Come to your father's arms, dear children, and join me in thanking God for his mercies to me. Your father is saved—he is a Christian—he believes as

you do—he thinks as you do—your God is his God—and the Blessed Virgin, your mother in heaven, is his mother also. She has snatched me from ruin—but for her I would have been lost for ever!” Tears choked the utterance of his delighted family, and they could articulate but brief expressions of their joy and gratitude—“Praises be to Jesus!” “Glory to God!” and “thanks to our Blessed Lady!” were repeatedly heard from weeping wife and daughters. Their prayers had been heard, their dearest earthly wishes granted, their hearts teemed with emotions which words could not express, and they could only weep their gratitude to the Father of mercies. They now

beheld that father whom they had never heard speak of religion but to oppose it, a fervent believer in its saving truths. How often, from early childhood until that present moment, had they heard him protest against the attributes of God—at one time accusing ~~him~~ of partiality, at another arraigning ~~his~~ authority—now denying even ~~his~~ existence, and again deifying human reason—but now, through the mercies of that same insulted being, they heard that parent proclaiming the goodness and the power of God, imploring ~~his~~ pardon, professing his entire belief in all the attributes of the Divinity; and repenting from his soul the follies and the errors of his

ways. Well might they weep; for, when through very excess of joy the tongue can no longer perform its office, the deep well springs of the heart give forth their tribute, and the eyes bespeak the thoughts the lips would fain utter.

As the evening was now far advanced the clergyman after explaining the nature and efficacy of extreme unction, deemed it advisable to comply with the sick man's request; and accordingly he prepared to administer this consoling sacrament. Let the reader picture to himself this interesting scene.—There stretched upon a bed of sickness and of death was the ransomed child of error; he who had for

so many years been lost—but was now found—the redeemed one, who had wearied his soul in the ways of infidelity—but now an humble suppliant at the cross of Jesus! His eyes uplifted to heaven, or resting on the little crucifix which he held firmly grasped in both hands, as he would lift it up before him, then press it to his lips and again repose it upon his bosom. At his head knelt his wife—the partner of his toils and troubles through life—she who had so long prayed for his conversion and grieved over his wanderings. Around his bed were kneeling his pious daughters mingling their tears and prayers with his. How earnestly and often had they



asked this favor from Heaven! How many fervent communions had they offered in his behalf! And the blessed boon had come—their prayers were granted. ~~It~~ It was hard indeed to part with their father—but to part with him thus—to see him die a Christian! Ah! there was joy in the sorrow—and here they knelt to thank their God, and bless the hand that reflected the painful blow! Some pious friends were also kneeling there—they had called to inquire after his condition—and hearing the joyful news they mingled with the little group now gathered around his bed. The Priest of God slowly repeated the appointed prayers—and ere he proceeded to the unctions, he

addressed both to the sick man and to those present a few words explanatory of the immediate ceremonies. He reminded them of the venerable antiquity of this sacrament, of its necessity, and the divine authority for its institution recorded in the Epistle of Saint James, fifth chapter. He spoke of the consoling assurances attached to its faithful observance. The promise of truth was given that the prayer of faith united to the "anointing with oil in the name of the Lord" should save the sick man—that the Lord "should raise him up." And that, in case any stain of sin still defiled the sick man's soul, and the frailties of human nature still rendered him dis-

pleasing to Heaven, the grace of the sacrament would wash them all away, through the merits of the blood of Christ. ~~It~~ "If he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him." What a consoling reflection for the dying Catholic! How admirably calculated to encourage him in that trying moment, when earth fades away, and the unseen visions of eternity are about to open before him—when the curtain shall fall, and the veil which conceals an unknown world shall be removed. Such did it prove to Mr. McGraw. He listened with edifying attention to the explanations given; and, when the clergyman proceeded to anoint the different senses, he repeated in English what


the Church required him to pronounce first in Latin. *“By this sacred unction, and through his most gracious mercy may our Lord remit unto thee all sins of which thou hast been guilty through the sense of seeing—and so of the rest.* As the sign of the cross was formed upon his eyes, his ears, his mouth and hands and feet, the sick man responded *“amen,”* in a tone which bespoke the pious emotions of his heart. All were edified—for all looked on with wonder as they beheld him thus captivated by the grace of God. † The calm resignation now depicted on his countenance was far different from that which had characterized him during the first part of his ill-

ness. It was the calm tranquillity breathed upon the soul by a hope in God. Tears were in his eyes—but they were the tears of an humble and a contrite heart. They were tears like those which Magdalen shed when “she wept and was forgiven.” Every expression that escaped his lips was an aspiration to God. He prayed earnestly for pardon—he called on Heaven in accents and in language which filled all present with amazement. For several moments after he was anointed, he poured forth such an earnest, such a pious strain of thanksgiving and of humble petition to God, that a stranger would have concluded he had always been accustomed to piety.

And why should we wonder? Was it not the work of God? If the ministering Angel touched Isaiah's hallowed lips with fire, why need we wonder that another Angel brought from above the inspiration which spoke through this recent triumph of the Cross? The ways of God are deep and mysterious. "Thy ways are not my ways, and thy thoughts are not my thoughts, for as far as the heavens are above the earth so far are my ways above thy ways and my thoughts above thy thoughts." "Who hath known the mind of the Lord—or who hath been his counsellor?" "Oh! the depth of the knowledge of the wisdom of God! How incomprehensible are his judg-

ments--how unsearchable his ways!"

**H**ere was another evidence of the power of God—Like another Saul, he had been, at least in one point of view, a persecutor of the people of God. And even while yet glorying in his pride of intellect he is stricken down in the midst of his career—and now humbly asks “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” The wolf has become a lamb—the reviler adores—and the goodness, the power, and the mercies of God stand avenged before his enemies! Glorious victory! more effectual in proclaiming the attributes of God than the creation of a world. For in this ~~his~~ power and wisdom are manifest—while in that ~~his~~ mercy and his pa-

tience stand proclaimed.  The Good Shepherd had indeed found the sheep that was lost—and had brought it home rejoicing—the Prodigal had returned to his Father's house, and found a secure asylum. The wearied spirit, like the dove of the deluge, had sought in vain for a spot whereon to rest—and now it was returned to the ark—where a more than Moses had welcomed it home. Another sinner had been converted—there was joy before the Angels of God—and earth was sharing in the festival of heaven. “Glorious things are said of the City of God!” where such charity for man is found! Who would despond, or who despair,



since grace and mercy may still be found?

Taking leave of Mr. McGraw, the clergyman retired—for the interview had continued nearly four hours—as he left the sick man's room, he recommended himself to his prayers and to those of the family, for he felt that God has visited that house. On the following day he returned again to Alexandria, and found his convert in the same pious disposition. The fact of his conversion had already become widely circulated, and numbers of all denominations flocked to have ocular demonstration of its truth. To all he spoke in the same pious terms. To all he manifested his sorrow for the past—his grati-

tude to God for being spared a sudden and an unprovided death. He proclaimed the glory of Mary—the Mother of God, whom now he always called his mother. He spoke of the circumstances of his conversion, and begged all to thank God for him. **H** Wonderful was the effect produced on those who heard him. Whence this sudden change—these pious dispositions? “Surely the finger of God is here,” said they; but among the many who visited his sick room, there was one class in whose interest and in whose visits he manifested the deepest anxiety. The young men of Alexandria—they who had known his principles and had heard him profess those princi-

ples in public and in private. It was for them that he called in a special manner. For them did he pray most unceasingly. He requested all who had ever been disedified or misled by his "senseless jargon," as he now styled his former efforts against Christianity, to come and look at him—to learn from him, so long a blasphemer against the Author of Christianity, the consoling truths of religion—to hear from him an entire recantation of all his former errors—to witness his firm belief in all the doctrines of the Holy Catholic Church—his sorrow for the past—his trust in the mercies of Heaven—his confidence in the all-atoning merits of his crucified Redeemer—his

hope for Heaven—his earnest entreaties that he might be remembered in prayer to God after his death not only by his family and Confessor, but by all who had the charity of God. How affectionately did he speak of his “Good Mother,” the Blessed Virgin! What endearing epithets did he bestow upon her! How openly did he proclaim to all alike, Christians and Infidels, that Mary, the Mother of Jesus, was the instrument of his conversion! And what indeed is a subject of edification, if not of amazement, is the correct and truly Catholic manner in which he spoke on this subject. Never derogating from the goodness of God, to extol the praises of Ma-

ry—never sharing the glory of the Creator with the creature. Surely the fact can be accounted for in no other way than that of his conversion—it came from above.

Before receiving ~~the~~ Holy Communion, Mr. McGraw requested his family to collect all his infidel books, papers and manuscripts to be burned. Had they, who were commissioned with this grateful task, yielded to his wishes, they would have burned them in the public streets as a testimony of his conversion to Christianity. But it was deemed sufficient to burn them in private as he publicly mentioned the fact on many occasions. How strong an evidence this of his sincerity! None but a

mind radically changed could be brought to give up thus the cherished sources of all its arguments and boasted theories. But the grace of God was triumphant here—and like the humble penitents mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles when appalled by the punishment inflicted on the Sons of Sceva, he too came “confessing his sins” and committing his wicked books to the flames.

On this occasion Mr. McGraw received **the** Holy Communion. His preparation for it had been truly edifying. Not a moment had been lost since his conversion. His wife and daughters had each in turn read and prayed by his bed; while no few among the many who visited him

performed the same pious office. He longed for that sacred food—that last and perpetual memorial of Christ's passion and suffering, in which the soul feasts upon the food of angels. He prayed most earnestly to be a partaker of that "Sacred Banquet in which Christ is received, his sacred passion commemorated, the soul is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to the worthy receiver." ~~7~~ And his pious wishes were gratified. On questioning him concerning this sacred dogma, the clergyman found him thoroughly instructed. As if by intuition, he possessed a thorough knowledge of the subject—the dispositions required—an entire faith in the sacred

mystery—the manner of receiving ~~the~~ Holy Communion—and even the ceremonies peculiar to this holy act.

Thus encouraged, the Priest prepared to administer ~~the~~ Holy Communion as viaticum. On this occasion many were present. Nor were they all Catholics, although all were in tears, so edifying and affecting was the scene. Words can ill express the piety manifested by Mr. McGraw at this important moment. All were kneeling, while the half suppressed sob and the gushing tear told eloquently the feelings of those present. It was a holy and a joyful moment! As the Priest rose from his knees and elevated the sacred Host before the sick man's eyes, he



raised himself in the bed, and crossing his hands upon his bosom, exclaimed, with tears in his eyes: “Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof—say but the word and my soul shall be healed! My heart is ready O God! my heart is ready? Even as the hart panteth after the streams of living waters, so does my soul thirst after thee, O God! When shall I come and appear before my God! How good thou art, my Saviour and my Redeemer! What have I in heaven but thee—and beside thee what do I desire on earth? What shall I render to the Lord for all that he hath done unto me? I will thank my God—I will praise and glorify his

A

holy name. Pardon me, O my Lord and my God, for all my transgressions against thee and thy Church. I believe thou art my Redeemer, and that in the last day I shall rise to meet thee. Oh my Saviour and my God, why art thou so good to me? I am not worthy to be called thy child—but let me call thee Father! No matter what thou doest unto me, I will love thee still. Punish me—condemn me—afflict me—I will call thee Father. What have I done to deserve this so great favor, that thou shouldst come to me upon my bed of sickness! I have blasphemed thee, I have been thy enemy, and is this thy revenge! Come, Lord Jesus!—come quickly. My soul hun-

gers and thirsts after thy Holy Sacrament—I am yours and you are mine.” These and many other similar aspirations did he pronounce, as still holding his hands crossed upon his breast, he kept his eyes steadfastly fixed upon the consecrated Host. Strength seemed to be given him for the time. His voice, though feeble, was distinct, save when either his own tears for a moment obstructed his utterance, or the sobs of the kneeling group interrupted him. Not a word was spoken but by the sick man, who was thus holding sweet converse with his Lord. Any interruption of so sacred a colloquy, would have been deemed almost sacrilegious by those present, and

the clergyman himself, though not unused to trying scenes, stood lost in wonder and amazement. ~~It~~ The sacred viaticum is placed upon the sick man's tongue—he folds his hands and reposes himself in prayer upon his pillow—the appointed ceremonial is finished, and all continued to kneel in silence, lest they should call back to earth the thoughts of this child of God. A brief half hour passed in thanksgiving for the blessings which Heaven had bestowed upon the family; and the clergyman journeyed homeward rejoicing and grateful.

It is not necessary to recount the different visits during the succeeding two weeks. Let it suffice that

each was marked by some incident of interest and edification. Numbers still daily and hourly flocked to see this example of God's goodness, and nearly all left him moved to tears by the fervor of his piety and the unction of his words. So great was the curiosity excited by this conversion, that several from the City of Washington visited him to assure themselves of its reality. To one of these Mr. McGraw remarked, that he wondered much "why men did not believe in the truths of Christianity. For me, he continued, even were I to try, I could not now reject my belief in all its doctrines. I have tried the world—have been an atheist and an infidel—

I have sometimes thought myself happy—I was sincere in what I said, and spoke freely what I believed. Yet how differently are my feelings now from those which I formerly had! Every thing around me and within me has changed—I always loved my family—but I never loved them so dearly as now. I now look upon my children and my wife with different eyes. They were always kind and dutiful to me—but, till I became a Catholic, I never appreciated their tenderness—~~and~~ and here,” said he, raising his little crucifix, which he constantly kept either in his hand or on his breast, “here is now my sign! Here is my model—by this I was redeemed—

*Continued*

under this sacred banner I have enlisted—and under this I will live and die. O Jesus, dying on the cross for me, have mercy on me! Mary, standing at the foot of the cross of Jesus, pray for me.”

Referring to some misunderstanding which had formerly existed between him and another for some real or imaginary cause, he observed: “how different is the morality taught by religion from that which the followers of reason practice. Even in my own case, the last and worst of all mankind—the most unworthy being in existence, how is it manifested. For years I have proudly kept aloof from *him*, foolishly supposing that reason and honor dictated the

step; nay, had I met him, there have been moments when my heart would have gloated over his death. His very name I hated. And now, how different is my case! Oh God of mercy! how freely do I forgive him, and earnestly beg him to forgive me! I a worm of earth—I a sinful man, and the greatest of sinners! Were he here now, how affectionately would I embrace him, and ask his forgiveness—for all is changed—as I hope to be forgiven, I forgive all in him. Glorious system of Divine Revelation! Glorious Religion! Sublime Morality! The false apostles of infidelity never conceived of it. It must have come from God! The mind of Deity alone could sug-



gest it—the Christian alone can practice it. I always admired it in others, but attributed it to human motives. I now feel my error—Oh God, forgive me! Thou who died for me, and prayed for those who crucified thee, I thank thee! I forgive also all who ever injured me—and ask pardon of all I have injured!

We must not suppose that Mr. McGraw was hurried away by impulse of feeling, or that the fervent expressions which thus came from his very soul, were the effect of religious excitement or enthusiasm. To be convinced of the reverse, it was but necessary to see and hear him, while living, speaking on the

subject of religion—to mark his tranquil manner and the calm and sweet smile depicted on his countenance. Now that he has gone, that the sound of his voice is hushed forever in the grave, his sincerity and earnestness of purpose, the settled and confirmed conviction which actuated him can be found by every honest mind, in his uniform deportment—in the traits which characterised him before and after his conversion—then, all was firm, determined resolution—in his denunciations of Christianity, even when most vehement, he was remarked for his consistency. Where real merit was due and he so believed, it was accorded—between the deserving


and the guilty—the really sincere and the base pretender—errors of judgment, and human frailties—a settled determination of malice and momentary weakness, he was quick to discriminate and sure to make every allowance. ¶ After his conversion to Christianity the same noble traits were observable in him—the errors of his former life he condemned indeed as the effects of pride of intellect—ambition of being known and noticed—but in others, he bewailed them as misfortunes over which we should weep, rather than condemn—he spoke of the professors of infidel opinions as persons for whom we should pray rather than despise—of their errors he spoke in

terms of unmitigated abhorrence; but of themselves, he spoke in true Christian charity—no hour of the day or night passed without bearing to heaven his earnest supplications in their behalf—for the snare of the fowler had been broken—his soul had been rescued from danger, and he wept as he thought of those still detained in their bondage and in error—there was no wild outbreking of feeling—no violence of expression—all was calm—all was tranquil; and the fervent outpourings of spirit, by which his inmost soul was made known, fell upon the ears of all who heard them as the accents of one standing on the verge of eternity—they still come back upon their

memories like echoes from that other world, where all is truth—all is stern reality. Some may condemn, and others doubt them; but of such we can only say, in the words of our Divine Redeemer: "Ye know not of what spirit ye are."

On ~~the~~ afternoon of ~~—~~ June, a messenger was despatched to Washington to request the immediate attendance of his confessor, for he was rapidly sinking, and he desired to see once again his Rev. friend. In a short time, the priest was at his bed side, for he had frequently promised the sick man to be near him in his last agony—a smile of joy lighted up the countenance of the sick man as the clergyman entered

*priest*

the room—a faint whisper was all that he could use. To every exhortation to place his reliance on the merits of his Saviour, and to keep his mind calmly bent on God, he would reply in a feeble whisper, or by raising his crucifix to his lips and kissing it with emotion—he was observed to weep, and when encouraged to hope for pardon, he replied: “Jesus wept for me in the garden, and may I not weep for my sins at the cross?”  When asked if he desired to receive once more his Lord in the Holy Communion, he raised his hands in an attitude of supplication, and smiling through his tears replied: “Did the people of God sigh for their altars and their homes?”

Does the wounded bird seek its nest or the wounded hare its burrow? So does my thirsting soul long for her food to strengthen her in this journey of death." ~~Sublime~~ Sublime answer! bespeaking the faith of the Christian and the hope inspired by true philosophy. ~~Holy~~ Holy Communion was then administered—he was supported by one of his daughters, as at this time he was too feeble to raise himself in bed. It was generally known that he was approaching his end, and accordingly several persons had assembled to witness his last moments; among those present were professors of different religions, yet all knelt and prayed with one accord. Hard indeed must have been the heart so

prejudiced as not to melt with mingled sympathy and joy at so moving a spectacle. Every breath of the dying man was a prayer, and every prayer was a tribute of gratitude to God, calm as a sleeping child he lay, with his hands still holding his crucifix and beads, his eyes raised to heaven, and his thoughts intent on God. ¶ To every petition of the Litany for a dying person he replied calmly and earnestly, to every aspiration he smiled assent, and for every prayer which the minister of God recited he looked, for he could not speak, his gratitude—no troubled heavings of the bosom or fearful wanderings of the eye gave reason to fear that he was tormented by



doubts or assailed by temptations—hard and long was his death agony, and the violence of his bodily sufferings forced a groan from sinking nature, but the soul, the immortal soul was calm—no fears but the salutary dread of judgment disturbed him—no doubt harrassed him—no dangers appalled him. He had made all his temporal arrangements, and had bestowed his dying blessing on his family and friends, he had taken leave of all earthly things and now he was composed to die. ~~The~~ The shades of death were gathering around him, and the night of eternity was fast setting in, yet a bright star of hope was rising to his view. The enemies of his salvation were doubtless

assaulting him, but in his hand, and in his heart, and on his lips was his shield of protection, the cross of Christ and the name of Mary. The cold sweat of death trickled down his manly brow, and his spirit was breathing its last earthly vow to heaven, but the angels of God were hovering around his pillow, and the smiles of his Blessed Mother were resting on her child. In that awful moment when the tide of life was fast ebbing, and the heart was ceasing its pulsations, then was Mary his Mother there. He had loved her in life, he still loved her in death—even as the lamb frightened at the coming storm seeks shelter in the fold, so did the departing spirit of our friend

now seek refuge in the bosom of its God. The sacred names of Jesus and of Mary were ever on his lips as they were ever in his heart—his eyes would rest with intense emotion first upon his crucifix, then upon the little group, the wife and children whom he was about to leave alone and unprotected, and a tear would steal from his eyes. The prayers for a departing soul were said, and though his voice failed him, his lips still moved in prayer: “Depart Christian soul out of this world,” said the minister of God in the sweet yet peculiar words of the Ritual as he held the cross before the eyes of the dying man, “Depart out of this world in the name of God the Father

Almighty who created thee—in the name of Jesus Christ, who redeemed thee—in the name of the Holy Ghost, who sanctified thee—in the name of the Angels, Arch-Angels, Thrones and Dominations, Cherubim and Seraphim—in the name of the Patriarchs and Prophets, of the holy Apostles and Evangelists, of the holy Martyrs and Confessors, of the holy Monks and Hermits, of the holy Virgins, and of all the Saints of God, may thy place be this day in peace, and thy abode in holy Zion!" Let the body return to the earth, and the spirit go back to the God who gave it—go forth Christian soul! The resplendant company of the Angels will meet thee at thy departure—the

court of Apostles will receive thee, the triumphant army of Martyrs will conduct thee, crowds of joyful Confessors will encompass thee, choirs of holy Virgins will go before thee, a happy rest in the bosom of the Patriarchs will be thy portion—Jesus Christ thy Saviour and thy judge will appear to thee with a mild and cheerful countenance, and give thee a place among those who are to be in his presence forever—go forth then Christian soul to meet thy Saviour and thy Judge—thou art not alone—Angels are hovering o'er thee—Mary is near thee, she will be thy solace, thy refuge, thy shield; go, thou art not friendless and lone, thou wilt not be unprotected in that

strange distant land—let not thy spirit tremble nor thy soul grow sad with fear, for thy mother will meet her child there—her name will be thy passport, her bosom thy rest—light up thy heart with joy, and thy soul in gladness, for thou hast loved her on earth, and thou shalt love her in heaven.

The pulse had ceased to throb, and the dying man's eyes were fixed in the vacant stare of death—a pause ensued—silence reigned in the room. It was an awful pause! for the Angel of death was there—and all felt the influence of his presence. The blessed candle threw its flickering rays upon the dying man's face; the cross was still held up before him,

while the clergyman's hand was grasped in the agonies of death by those of the departing one—his bosom heaved with but few convulsive efforts—his lips still moved in prayer—they lisped the sweet names of “Jesus and Mary”—one struggle—one sigh—and the ransomed spirit had sped its flight to eternity!

Come to his assistance, ye Saints of God—meet him, O meet him, ye Angels of God!—Mother of God protect him!—Jesus Christ receive him! And may the Angels lead him to his place of rest. “Eternal rest grant to him, O Lord!” exclaimed the Priest, and, with one accord, all present responded, “And let perpetual light shine upon him.” A prayer was offered to Heaven in his

behalf—an earnest prayer from hearts stricken with sorrow—yet filled with gratitude to God. For they knew that he had tried to prepare for death, and they felt that he had passed to a better world. Then, as he breathed a petition that all present might die the death of the just, and that their last end might be like his, the priest turned towards the widow and the orphans, offered what feeble consolation was in his power, and left them alone with the dead—for in those moments, when the heart is too full to speak, nature speaks in all the eloquence of tears. There are moments when it is sweet to yield to the feelings of sadness, and the heart is relieved by weeping. Why then disturb the sacred grief



of the widowed one—or seek to check the orphan's tear when, for the first time, a sense of loneliness comes upon them, and they “will not be comforted?” Jesus wept at the tomb of Lazarus—why may we not weep at a parent's grave? ~~XXXX~~

On Saturday June — the funeral obsequies were performed in the church of Saint Mary's, in Alexandria, in presence of an immense concourse of witnesses. The church was crowded by persons of all denominations, anxious to hear something relative to the facts of his conversion; and no few among them had come from Washington with the same views. Some, doubtless, were then present, who disbelieved the

whole affair; or professed to think that it was but a fiction raised by the family and friends of the deceased. With such it was and is entirely useless to speak—for they would not believe, even though one were to rise from the dead and proclaim the wondrous fact. They would even doubt their own existence, were it not they would expose themselves to the ridicule of others. The miracles of Christ failed to convince many of ~~H~~is hearers—why then wonder that there are found minds so obstinately prejudiced as to reject this so public a fact? Every one capable of appreciating the wondrous ways of God will at least enquire into the facts of the case be-

fore rejecting what may at first appear incredible.

In the funeral sermon the officiating clergyman stated the principal facts enumerated in the foregoing pages, and dwelt upon the mysterious Providence of God. Then, preceding the funeral train, he led the way to that last resting place of mortality, where undisturbed the slumberer reposes in the dreamless sleep of death, till the Archangel's trump shall call the world to judgment.

So lived and died the subject of this narrative—such were the principal events connected with his truly remarkable conversion—who can reflect upon them, and not give thanks to that Father of mercies whose

kindness knoweth no bounds, and whose goodness is unto everlasting? Who is like to the Lord our God! How incomprehensible are his judgments—how unsearchable his ways! Every created being proclaims his power, and “day discovereth the light of him to the day.” By a special mark of his protecting care, some are preserved in innocence from early life and grow to maturity with all the virtue of their youth—others are cut off in the midst of their sins, and ere a moment is given them to sue for mercy they are ushered into the presence of their God. No few are hurried away, even after the commission of their first and only mortal sin, and without the grace of the Sacraments—without contrition,

without mercy they are ushered into the presence of their Sovereign Judge—while others, as in the case of Mr. McGraw, who live in open rebellion against the Almighty are visited, even in their last moments, by the mercies of Heaven. Wondrous are thy ways, O God! and who shall explain them! Who then shall doubt of the mercies of Heaven! or who shall say there is no room for pardon! The simple narrative in the preceding pages inspires a three fold reflection. Trust in God, charity for others, and a tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin. See how good the Almighty was to our convert—from his throne in heaven he looked upon him, and manifested his mercies by changing this heart of stone

into one of flesh. He who had so long waited the return of this unguided Absalom comes in search of him—great had been his errors—yet the goodness of God was greater—numerous his sins, yet still more the mercies of Heaven. Long had he resisted the graces proffered him—the entreaties of friends—the prayers and good examples of his pious family, and the many inducements within and around him to know, to love, and to serve his God—hope seemed lost, and the most sanguine among his friends had ceased to anticipate a change—yet, glory be to God! that change came! Like the lightning flash from heaven, the truth of God broke upon him, and the walls of error crumbled at the sound

of the trumpet of truth—the beauties of religion were made manifest to him—a luminous eternity was opened to his view, and he was a Christian! With what confidence in the goodness of God should not this inspire us! No sins are too dark—no guilt too heinous—no crime too great for the mercies of Heaven. In a moment when we least expect it, the time of visitation may come, and the sinner become a saint. If we admire the goodness of God in the conversion of Mr. McGraw, let us strive to imitate as far as is in our power, that mercy towards each other—let us be patient and charitable one to another—thinking no evil—desiring not revenge, but rather to be kind to all. He whom we may

consider a child of wrath, may be near to his conversion—he whom we despise and shun, may yet become a child of benediction. Let us then be charitable even as God our Father is charitable—Heaven bears with his errors and spares him in all his wanderings—why should we usurp the attributes of God, and in our individual capacities, condemn what he endures? We too have our faults—each one has frailties at which he sometimes blushes—why then condemn in others what we indulge in ourselves, or why expect to find others perfect, when we ourselves are filled with imperfections? Ah! let us imitate the charity of God towards sinners—he loves this virtue; it was this that brought him down



from heaven—it was for this he died. Let us, who are sinners, be to others as we wish our Lord to be to us. “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another.” And does not the remarkable trait related in these little pages inspire confidence in the protecting care of our Blessed Mother in heaven? Who can doubt it? Who that witnessed the facts here related, or heard the pious sentiments he expressed in regard to the Blessed Virgin, can for a moment doubt the great share that pure and holy being had in the affair of his conversion? Her pure hands were raised in prayer to her Divine Son for him—her maternal heart felt for his miseries; she saw him on the brink of

ruin; about to be precipitated into that awful gulf, "where no order, but everlasting horror dwells." She saw that another victim was to be deprived of the fruits of Christ's sufferings, and that the enemy was about to deprive him of the atonement of her Son. She saw it, and she prayed it might not be—she was moved to pity, and kneeling before the Redeemer she called on him by the endearing name of Son to pity and to pardon this wandering child! Her prayer was heard—Jesus, her Divine Son, granted her petition, and the sinner was converted.

Glorious belief! consoling thought! We have a Mother in Heaven to plead with Jesus in our behalf! Though the eternal Father be angry

with us, can he resist the intercession of his Divine Son? and when that eternal Son is petitioned by his blessed Mother, can he refuse to grant her prayer? When such a Mother pleads with such a Son, for what may we not hope! Her maternal heart is filled with love for us—her pure soul is the temple of every virtue, and if her hands were never lifted in vain on earth to plead with her Divine Son, the cause of suffering humanity, why should we be required to believe, that now that she is enthroned in glory, she pleads in vain for us? Ah! far from every feeling heart so gross an idea of the gratitude of Jesus for his blessed Mother. Her arms were the first to clasp his tender form, and her chaste

bosom was the first to pillow his sacred head, so soon to be pierced with a thorny crown—her eyes first beamed a mother's smile upon him in the humble manger of Bethlehem, and shed the bitterest tear at the cross of Calvary—her voice was sweet and powerful enough to win him from his disputation with the Doctors in the temple, and to induce him to anticipate the eternal decrees of his Father, at the marriage feast of Cana in Gallilee. As he cast his closing eyes towards the foot of the cross they rested on his blessed Mother, faithful in death, as she had ever been in life—what then was his expression? Was it that of many who almost censure him for his love for his Mother? Hear it ye who re-

vile this sacred custom, and with us strive to obey it—"Behold thy Mother!" Yes, Holy Mother of Jesus, thou art our Mother also! We do behold thee—though every where lovely, 'tis at the foot of the cross thou art most dear to us—'tis there thy fervent children love to dwell upon thee, for at the foot of the cross thou wast given us for our Mother; why then should we not love thee, O Virgin Daughter of Zion! The harp of the minstrel and the inspired lay of the prophet have proclaimed thy greatness and thy dignity—kings and emperors have praised thee—the learned have set forth thy merits, and the ignorant have loved thee—the glorious Church throughout the world proclaims thee the Mother of

God, and all nations shall call thee blessed. Yes, thou art our Mother—we love thee as the Mother of God—we will strive to follow thy example and to imitate thy virtues—with God for our Father, and thee for our Mother, what shall we fear? Though enemies surround us, and the powers of darkness oppose our journey to Heaven, we will fly to thy protection, and exclaim “Jesus, dying on the cross for me, have mercy on me! Mary, standing at the foot of the cross of Jesus, pray for me!”

THE END.











880083

