EDITORIAL

WE hope that the articles of this number will succeed in showing what a wide-ranging idea conversion is. In its most obvious meaning it is the act or process by which someone turns to God. This at least is the appearance. But the reality in the Christian view is that God turns people to him. Conversion is a being turned rather than a turning. It is true that God uses our co-operation in converting both ourselves and other people; but always it is he that is the prime converter. Then again we normally think of conversion as an event that happens, and is then over and done with. But when we look closer the fact is seen to be rather different; the convert goes on being converted for the rest of his life. Conversion is a life-long being turned to God. Finally we usually talk as if converts were only a particular group in the Church, those who were not born to the faith, but came to it later in life. But in fact all Christians are converts. 'Except you be converted and become like little children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.' Nobody is saved, no one gets to heaven, unless God has converted him, unless the Father has drawn him to Christ.

Our first article may seem rather remote from the theme of conversion. It is a talk given by the Pope, when he was still Cardinal Patriarch of Venice, on the duties of the bishop, and we print it as an expression of filial veneration and affection for the Holy Father. Cardinal Roncalli was speaking of the bishop as father and shepherd, and perhaps we can fit his talk into our conversion theme by saying that it is the office of the shepherd to recover the lost sheep, that is to convert them and keep them converted.

This article is followed by a sermon on St Dominic, which is not only proper to the month of August, but may perhaps serve to link the discourse of Cardinal Roncalli with the other articles in this number. For St Dominic explicitly thought of himself and the order he founded as providing the bishops with mobile forces to assist them in their office of preaching; preaching the gospel to feed the sheep of Christ, to save souls, to convert men to God.

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