

Right-Mindedness.

It is possible for a man to be a daily communicant up to the day on which he formally renounces his allegiance to the Church and becomes what people call an atheist. It has been done; that's how we know it's possible.

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When such a thing happens, after the first shock we look back over the life of the individual to find the cause, not that we want to pass judgment upon him, but that we may steer clear of the rocks upon which he foundered.

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There is a little bug in Brazil that thrives upon furniture. It cannot penetrate varnish, but it finds an unvarnished part and makes entry. Through that same little hole it drops the saw-dust, a tiny bit every day, as it proceeds on its course. One day a leg of a piano or of a chair or table caves in, and the householder finds that what was fair without to behold was a delusion and a snare within.

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A pet vice has the way of this Brazilian bug. It sneaks in and goes to work. It drops a little saw-dust every day, and it is the trail of this saw-dust that enables us to trace the final collapse back to its first cause. The varnish remains untouched.

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This pet may be sloth, which is the catechism name for comfort. It is a delightful sin, because it requires so little of us, and it is so easy to take. Or it may be presumption, a false sense of security, manifesting itself in an unwillingness to give up an occasion of sin, through a feeling that after all this or that sin can't be so bad, since so many people get away with it and society accepts it without protest. Sometimes it is avarice, especially with people who are active in business: it was with Judas. Most often it is pride, under the title of self-sufficiency.

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It is the mind that rules the man, that makes or unmakes him. The mind is right when it is in conformity with objective truth; it is wrong when it disagrees with objective truth; it is superlatively wrong when it denies the existence of objective truth. And therein lies the most jovial paradox of our great American life.

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We are quite wedded to the idea of authority, in laughable defiance of our bally-hooing for induction. When Mr. Gotrox gets the gout, the radio summons Dr. Spiffledink from Vienna by airplane, because Dr. S. is the world's greatest authority on gout. When Prof. Anthrax lectures the American Academy of Menials, he marshals a vast army of authorities in support of his promises. Isham Jones is an authority on something or other, and Jack Dempsey on something else. And if you want to get a belly-ache from an overdose of authorities, read the press-agent criticisms in any reputable review of current literature.

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We adore authority in everything but religion. How passing strange! The finite mind of man can reason a bit on the finite world about him, but it doesn't want to reason on that; it wants to pay a man to do the reasoning. Unaided by grace that finite mind cannot work out its final destiny, yet it is perfectly willing to take a chance on a little induction, because blind acceptance of authority is unworthy of a reasoning being.

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The Catholic Church was established by Christ to be your authority in

all matters pertaining to your soul's salvation. She says:
"You must not read this book." You reply: "That's all very well
for ignorant people; it's a very useful law; I wish they'd all
obey it." The Bishop says: "You must not dance and brawl on
Saturday night; it is no fit preparation for Sunday." You say:
"Where do you get that stuff?" Our Lord said: "If he will not
hear the Church let him be to thee as the heathen and the pub-
lican.

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