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A REDEMPTORIST FROM THE GOLDFIELDS:
HENRY HALSON, C.S.S.R. (1833-1900)¹

1. *The Anglican Home*; 2. *The British Army*; 3. *The Goldfields*; 4. *The Call to the Altar*; 5. *The Redemptorist Missioner*.

Henry Halson C.S.S.R. is a person who appears at first sight enigmatic. Those who were closest to him usually spoke of him as a gentle, kindly good man. His Redemptorist companions mention him many times as the saintly Father Halson. The image that emerges is of a quiet pious man, more of a hermit than a man of action. His life, however, offers an altogether different picture. Born into a deeply religious Anglican family, he showed himself as a child as devout and studious, slow to make friends outside his own affectionate family. The circumstances of his life led him to Turkey and the Crimean War, to Australia, to Canada, to Rome and to the Catholic priesthood and then back again to Australia. This extraordinarily varied life led Father Halson in the end to his collapse on his way to visit the Blessed Sacrament and to a death that was so fitting to a man who even long before his Catholic days had sought God in a deep devotion to the Eucharist.

¹ This account of Father Halson has been gathered from the archives of the Canberra province. The documents are «His own *Curriculum vitae*», Reminiscences of his brother Christian, the Necrology written after his death by a member of the community where he died, in fact Father Patrick Leo and a study written by Father William Packer in the early fifties from the available documentation and his memory of conversations with Father Thomas O'Farrell, who had been a companion and for a time superior of Father Halson whom he admired.

1. THE ANGLICAN HOME

Henry Halson was born on 6th January 1833 into the comfortable middle class family of Charles Halson and Christian Major. It was a genuinely devout family, perhaps even for those times somewhat over strict. Henry with his brother Christian and two of their sisters were confined to the nursery during their earliest years. They were strictly yet lovingly controlled by their parents. They were given every opportunity to study the Scriptures and to find themselves at their ease in the knowledge and the love of God. They were discouraged from playing with other children but were permitted to bowl their hoops in the street outside their home. Perhaps it was an unexciting childhood but the four little ones were able to entertain themselves. One little occupation remembered by Christian was to play at Church ceremonies, dressing up and arranging altar, lectern and pews. They performed with serious recollection baptism and various services more or less according to the Book of Common Prayer with formal readings from the lectern. And they took it in turn to preach to the tiny but so earnest congregation.

For Henry this happy childhood changed at the age of eight. As Henry himself tells it, «at the age of eight I was sent to a very Protestant school». Christian adds the detail that it was conducted by a lady. The report given by the lady at the end of this experience was in terms that were to become familiar during the rest of his schooling. He was described as a gentle, studious scholar.

After two years under the care of the lady mistress Henry passed to King's College School in the Strand, London, the prep school for the College. This was to be the scene for seven years of his secondary schooling. Among his papers was found a report of his performance with which he seems to have been pleased enough to keep. It describes him as «diligent, studious and successful». His studies at the School and the College emphasized the classics and he had a solid foundation of Greek and Latin when he passed on to Oxford.

During the years at King's College Henry had the companionship of his brother Christian. The two boys lived in a cottage

rented for them by their father. It was a closeness to each other that was to remain with them for the rest of their lives. It is to Christian that we owe an assessment of his brother's development during his adolescent years. «He was very reserved and quiet, not given to friendships, joining in no amusements. I doubt if he ever even saw a game of cricket or football till he was eighteen or nineteen years old. He never received punishment of any kind during his whole career and studied hard, gaining great favor from all the masters».

In 1851 Henry passed from the school to the College, where his performance in the two, years he spent there gained from the Principal, Professor Plumpetre, the report that his literary success was «generally satisfactory, divinity very satisfactory».

At this time Henry declared that he had become «a devotee of the High Church party, fasting and praying very much». He also spoke of having begun to «look up to the great Roman Branch, as I thought it». He also read Catholic devotional works, such as were translated by Pusey and his friends.

Christian also spoke of his brother's religious practice. He began to attend a small chapel served by two enthusiastic High Church clerics who seem to have given him spiritual guidance. A more important influence on Henry, however, was the Vicar of St. Matthew's, Stoke Newington, close to the cottage used by the two brothers. This was Rev. T.A. Pope, who became a firm friend and guide to the earnest young man. Henry also visited the London Oratory newly established by Father Faber, who in Christian's view occasioned in Henry «a great unsettlement of mind which carried him many years later to join the R.C. Church». Whether or not that judgment was well founded, it must be said that the influence of Faber was not the sole cause of Henry's turning to the Catholic Church. The Rev. T.A. Pope, such a good friend, had become a Catholic about 1852. It was, after all, a time when the Church of England was still enduring the effects of the Oxford Movement, which in 1845 had led Newman to Rome.

Father Packer, a most assiduous researcher, has a thought about these adolescent years of Father Halson that deserves to be recalled. As an Anglican he used to walk three miles each

Sunday fasting in order to receive the Sacrament, as he put it. Very likely this information came by way of Father O'Farrell recalling a conversation with an old friend and companion in the foundation years in Australia. That is also the source, no doubt, of the account of Halson's visit to a Catholic Church about that same time. He was horrified at the little reverence shown by the altar boys as they passed before the tabernacle. «Can they really believe – he wondered – that Jesus Christ was truly present in the tabernacle?». That devotion to the Holy Eucharist was to be a distinctive mark of the Redemptorist Father Halson.

According to Christian, «it was an established thing in the family that [Henry] was to take Orders in the English Church and to go to Oxford, his elder brother [Christian] having been at Cambridge preparatory to ordination». Accordingly, in 1853 Henry went to Oxford and was accepted into Lincoln College, «rather unwilling to sign the Thirty-nine Articles». This reluctance reveals a significant stage in his spiritual development. One may suspect that it was due to his devotion to the Virgin Mother of God and the Holy Eucharist, as Christian had discovered in his brother's earlier piety.

Christian reports that Henry had been unsuccessful in an attempt to gain a scholarship to the College due probably to the fact that his brother's devotions had been allowed to encroach on his studies. The rector of the College, however, was so impressed by the examination that he insisted on Henry's entering Lincoln. During his time in Oxford, a little less than two years, Henry decided, as Christian believed, not to accept Orders in the Anglican Church.

In any case, early in 1855 on the occasion of a visit to the family, now living in the Isle of Wight, Henry told his father that he could not receive Orders. Henry himself speaks of his father's disappointment, who seemed to have been little concerned with his son's distress at the painful interview but rather with the frustration of his own plans for the future of his talented son. The outcome was that Henry was no longer acceptable in the family home, and it was not until he spoke about his father's death in 1871 that he was able to say that the division had been healed.

2. THE BRITISH ARMY

The separation from the family was surely a bitter sorrow for Henry, but he was not left long to brood. Friends set about helping him and he found himself appointed to care for a business in Rio de Janeiro by a London company with interests in South America. Before he could leave to take up his post the parent company became bankrupt. His good friends then found him a position in the British Army, which was not difficult as it was the time of the Crimean War. Henry was far behind the front, as his occupation was in the Commissariat².

Henry's *curriculum vitae* naturally enough offered little information about his army life, but Christian amply makes up for him. Conditions in the Commissariat were quite wretched, as was so much during that war, and that apparently made Henry's characteristic thoroughness readily appreciated. He was assigned to the pay office, and he soon drew the notice of the Commissar General, particularly since he had studied the Turkish language in order to be able to work better with the locals. After six months he was appointed to have charge of a cattle station near a village in Turkey to provide food for the troops. In his position he was given a bodyguard of four Turkish soldiers and an interpreter. He remained there until the end of the war.

From the brief account given by Christian it would seem that his brother's experiences were interesting and very much to Henry's credit. In fact Christian considers that his brother was greatly esteemed by his higher officers. At the conclusion of his service and his return to England he was given a bonus in addition to his pay in recognition of his fine work.

Henry returned to the family on the Isle of Wight about the middle of 1856. It was to that address that a letter was sent by the army to inform Henry that his name had been given to

² It was fitting that Father Halson's quiet character did not become involved in the military activities which were the setting of his work. They have been well described by W.H. RUSSELL, *The British Expedition to the Crimea*, Routledge 1858 (Russell was the correspondent of *The Times* with the troops) and by Sir Robert GARDINER, *Considerations on the Military Organisation of the British Army*, Hawksworth 1858.

the War Office with a recommendation that he be given a permanent posting in the army. The letter arrived on 20th November 1856, the very day on which Henry and Christian embarked at Liverpool for Australia. Unhappily the father's resentment at Henry's unwillingness to accept the Anglican ministry prevented his forwarding word of the letter, which was not discovered until his death.

3. THE GOLDFIELDS

Henry was not left long in indecision about his future. «In the latter part of the year» – writes Christian – «my brother and I determined to go to Australia». It was a decision that probably almost proposed itself immediately. The 1850s were the period of the gold rush, which brought eager speculators from many parts of the world to the goldfields. Gold was found in New South Wales in 1851. Other finds followed as prospectors were stirred by this first success. Very soon the goldfields of Victoria proved themselves a real El Dorado. In 1854 some order was brought into the unruly diggings as a result of the challenge to the Victorian government and its ill-advised restraints put on the diggers. The violent suppression of the rising in the Eureka Stockade shed light on the grievances and led to a calmer atmosphere in which it was possible, to provide more reasonable legislation. By 1856 when the Halson brothers set out the search for gold was as enthusiastic as ever but much more orderly.

There was already another of the family at work on the Victorian diggings, and that was an additional reason for Henry and Christian to find their way there. An older brother, James, was in Dunolly when they embarked in Liverpool³. They reached Melbourne in April 1857. When they caught up with James he had gone on to Inkerman. That frequent change of address was the typical way of life of the prospector.

³ During their years together the Halson brothers changed their camp to many sites, all of them in the region between Ballarat and Bendigo an area about 100 to 150 kilometres from Melbourne. The places mentioned in their accounts were all tiny mining settlements, some of which have survived.

For the fourteen years the brothers worked on the gold-fields they lived this nomadic life. From Inkerman they passed to McIvor, to Inglewood, to Ararat, to Moonambel, to Redbank and finally to Stuart Mill. This last was to be the scene of Henry's embracing the Catholic Church. The tiny mining settlement remains today little changed. It was near the promising township of St. Arnaud, soon to distinguish itself as a bishopric of the Church of England.

The three brothers were apparently very different from their mining companions. Living according to the strict family discipline they had known from childhood, they pitched their tents apart from the rest and worked undisturbed at the diggings. This way of life particularly suited Henry. Even in the excitement of the miner's life he remained as pious and studious as he had always been. He writes of this time, «I bought a cheap edition of the *Imitatio Christi* and read and reread it many times». There were no Catholic churches around in those days and I knew no Catholics and never heard Mass and never visited one of their churches for worship. But I remembered early days when I had *bona fide* loved 'the sacrament' as I held it then to be in the Church of England and I sought to give myself to God if He would accept the most ungrateful and vilest wretch that breathed». In this decision Henry seems to have been in no way influenced by any individual. It was entirely spontaneous. His agreeable character, however, won him the friendship of some Catholics, among them the storekeeper at Stuart Mill, a man with the uncompromisingly Irish name of Coolaghan.

The decision was strong enough to cause him to set out to enter the Catholic Church or as he put it, «I set out for Ballarat, a long journey for me». The journey would have been long for anyone, being some seventy miles: it took Henry three days on foot. He went straight to the cathedral presbytery, where he was received rather coldly by Dean Moore (later Bishop of Ballarat), who sent him on to one of the curates, Father O'Donnell. It did not take long to recognize that the inquirer was already thoroughly prepared for his entry into the Church. He was formally

received on 1st January 1869 and to his special delight he received Holy Communion⁴.

Shortly after this happy end to Henry's search for peace he and Christian suffered the sad loss of their elder brother, James. On 3rd March 1869 Henry went into his brother's hut early in the morning and found James lying on the ground quite dead. James had already been suffering from consumption for some time, and he had apparently fallen from his camp bed.

Influenced perhaps by his brother's death, Henry decided to give up the search for gold. The three brothers had known little success during thirteen years around the goldfields. They had made barely enough to live on except for one week when they had taken some 50 ounces. Henry especially was no longer fit for such a demanding life. He had always been sickly and had admitted that he found the life too severe. At one time, too. He had contracted what was known as 'colonial fever'. It was so bad, he said, that in the end «God snatched me from the grasp of death that was already on me». He had survived, as did many others on the diggings, without doctors or medicine.

It was a serious accident, finally, that persuaded him. One day with Christian he was hauling a log that had been cut for fire wood, when it suddenly swung and struck him violently on the chest knocking him unconscious. The accident confined him to his hut for some months, which made him realize that the rugged life was no longer for him.

It was obvious enough for him to try for the position of teacher in one of the tiny public schools of the mining districts. His qualification as an Oxford man won for him ready acceptance by the local authorities. He was appointed to have charge of the school in Moonambel, where he had lived for a time with his brothers after his arrival in the country. At once his ability and his amiable character made him popular in his new home. It did not last long, however. His brother Christian tells us that the school was in the trusteeship of the Church of England, and the Archdeacon of Castlemaine came to investigate the Roman Catholic teacher, determined to remove him. This he did on the

⁴ Christian's account shows some confusion about the date.

grounds that Henry had not obtained the State government certificate. Needless to say, Henry lost no time in getting the required piece of paper, and so fortified, he was appointed to the school at Avoca. Here he settled down to «two quiet years of studying during my long hours of solitude», as he later wrote.

In Avoca he had charge of a pleasant little school of some thirty scholars of whom three or four were «quite grown up young women». His pupils and his neighbors were at once attached to him; and with a weekly visit by his brother from Stuart Mill his time «passed cheerfully and happily».

4. THE CALL TO THE ALTAR

This peaceful life came to an end in 1871. In that year his father «with whom I had long since been reconciled», died; and his mother also who had so lovingly cared for his childhood, died about the same time. The two brothers decided to leave Australia for England. They arrived at the home of the surviving family on the Isle of Wight in 1872. In that devout Anglican home Henry could well have been some embarrassment, but he was of a character which never found it difficult to please. He comfortably joined the family in morning and evening prayers and of a Sunday used to walk to Ventnor, where there was a Catholic church.

After a few months Christian and Henry decided to go to Canada, where their only surviving brother, Robert, was living near Hamilton, Ontario. After a few weeks Henry moved to Hamilton, where at the request of the Vicar General of the diocese, Father E.I. Henna, he became headmaster of the Catholic school. The two became close friends. When the Vicar General heard the story of his life in Australia he suggested the priesthood and Henry admitted that the thought had been long with him in Australia. He was finding the severe climate of Canada hard to bear and maybe that helped him to respond happily to the Vicar General's suggestion that he go to the seminary of St. Sulpice in Montreal.

At first he found it hard to settle down to the regime of the classroom, especially since it was all in Latin. Just the same, the seminary was for him a delight, as he recalled. «The Fathers helped me and pitied me. I shall never forget their affection and kindness. So passed two very happy years». During this time in the seminary he began find delight in Catholic practices. He was professed in the Third Order of St. Francis, «which was a new grace for me». He also discovered the *Visits to the Blessed Sacrament* of St. Alphonsus, «which opened new fields of love and sorrow for me». St. Alphonsus clearly answered to that longing for Eucharistic piety that had so stirred him in his Anglican days.

He received the subdiaconate in June 1876, and his spiritual director advised him to finish his preparation for the priesthood in Rome, especially since he showed signs of attraction to religious life. Acting on that advice, he went to Rome, where he resided in the German College during his studies. The rector of the English College introduced him to Father Edward Douglas, rector of the Redemptorist house of S. Alfonso, whom he gladly choose as his spiritual director for the two years he resided in Rome. When he made known his admiration of St. Alphonsus and his desire to belong to his Congregation he met with no encouragement. It was probably his sickly appearance that made Father Douglas slow to share his enthusiasm.

Henry was ordained deacon in St. John Lateran in March 1877 and priest in June in the private chapel of Mgr. Lenti, Vicar. He celebrated his first Mass in the church of S. Alfonso before the miraculous picture of Our Lady of Perpetual Help on the following day.

Still eager for the religious life and seeing that the Redemptorists seemed to be closed to him, he decided to travel to Turin to put his case to the Superior General of the Pallottines, Father Faa di Bruno. Again his apparent frailty told against him. He spent another year in Rome studying and also acting like so many other English converts of that time. He venerated the shrines of Loreto and Assisi and with special fervor that of St. Alphonsus at Pagani.

In 1878 he set out for England, calling at Lourdes and Paray-le-Monial. The English converts of those times simply lo-

ved pilgrimages. In July he was reunited with Christian, whom he had given up hope of seeing again after they had separated in Canada. Christian was now living with his brother-in-law, Vicar of Shanklin, Isle of Wight and two sisters.

One of the two sisters in the vicarage had always been close to Henry. Henry took lodgings for himself in the nearby village of Ventnor, where he said Mass for the people of a morning and then would meet Christian half between the two places and spend the rest of the day together. One day Christian set out rather earlier than usual, and reached Ventnor just as Henry was beginning Mass. It was a morning Christian never forgot. In the afternoon they went back to Shanklin, especially for the sake of Henry's special sister, whose health was declining.

5. THE REDEMPTORIST MISSIONER

Henry remembered his association with the Redemptorist in Rome and the spiritual guidance he had received from Father Douglas, and he wished to continue in England a practice that had meant much to him. He became a frequent visitor to their house in Clapham from the time of his arrival in the country. Clapham was the residence of the provincial, Father Robert Coffin, and on one of his visits Henry spoke to him of his interest in St. Alphonsus and his attraction to the Redemptorists. To his delight the provincial showed sympathy with his desire and suggested he try his vocation. Nothing could have suited him more, and he found himself in September 1878 on his way to, Bishop Eton, Liverpool, the Redemptorist novitiate.

The novice master was Father Franz Ziereis (1825-1907), an exile of the «Kulturkampf» from the Redemptorist province of Upper Germany (now the Munich province)⁵. He was obviously a humane novice master because when Henry received from his sister, the wife of the Vicar of Shanklin, an urgent message to

⁵ Father Ziereis was one of the many German religious expatriated by the «Kulturkampf». In his province he had been for many years engaged in the formation of its candidates. As novice master in Bishop Eton he trained a number of the men who came to Australia.

the effect that the younger sister, Henry's companion in the nursery, seemed close to death he allowed the new novice to go at once to her side. Henry arrived on the Isle of Wight on 19th December. On the following day his favorite sister died. «Henry was with her when she fell asleep», Christian recalls.

On the feast of St. Teresa of Avila, 15th October 1878 he had received the habit of the Congregation, and on the same date of the following year he took his vows as a Redemptorist, becoming a member of the community of Bishop Eton. At this point he concludes his *curriculum vitae* with the words of the psalm, «*Domine Deus meus, sanasti me; eduxisti ab inferno animam meam*». It is an expression of his sense of relief at the end of his search for God's will.

Of his life during this first year as a Redemptorist missionary we have no record. Judging by his later life, however, we may safely presume that he took his part in the activities of his companions at home and abroad. It was only for a year, because at the end of 1881 he was chosen as one of the pioneers who were to bring the Redemptorists to Australia.

The members of the founding community were housed in the presbytery of the parish of Singleton, which had been put in their charge. It was a solid stone building, which had comfortably accommodated the parish priest and an assistant. It remains little changed to the present day and is quite a stately dwelling, but one wonders how it satisfied the needs of six Redemptorists, whose numbers increased in the following years.

It was a busy community. All the Fathers shared in the care of the extensive parish and tried to satisfy the growing demands for missions in the various parts of the new country. The records of the house show Father Halson playing his part with the rest. He became a familiar figure among the parishioners, and if we may judge by the record of his preaching he generously shared his own profound faith and devotion and no doubt showed in the confessional an understanding gained by his own life's adventures in the Crimea and the goldfields and elsewhere.

The first indication of his work as a missionary came in what must have been for him a familiar setting. It was in Ballarat in 1886. In the previous year a most successful mission had

been preached in the Melbourne parish of St. Kilda, which introduced the Redemptorists to Victoria. It resulted in appeals from various parts, especially from the cathedral cities of Ballarat and Bendigo. Father Halson was appointed to the team that was to preach in Ballarat led by Father O'Farrell with the Belgian Father Henry Berghman, both already renowned as preachers. Father Halson had an attraction even they could not rival. When he appeared at the cathedral he was greeted by the bishop who as Dean Moore had shown such little interest in the travel-stained tramp seeking entry into the Catholic Church. Now the bishop, was quite effusive in his greeting, calling the missionary «my old miner». In the case of those who had been companions of the «old miner» there was a warmth that touched the heart of their fellow digger. Like him they had walked from Stuart Mill. And surely it was a special pleasure to meet again the Irish store-keeper, Coolaghan.

The mission in Ballarat was certainly memorable. At its end the bishop gave a dinner to the missionaries and invited dignitaries of the city. It was an occasion he used to announce that he expected to have the Redemptorists permanently in the diocese. It was news that was at once agreeable to his guests. In fact, the bishop had already negotiated with superiors in Rome and in England, and all that remained was to select a site for the foundation.

The bishop had already determined where that was to be. It was a place on the highway to South Australia called Ebor, just a mile, he declared, from the Ballarat post office. Almost inevitably, one of the first community was Father Halson. He was a man who had learned the hard way how to measure distance, and he made it his business as soon as he could to walk from Ebor to the Ballarat post office – a lot more than a mile, he told his companions.

A small community was established at the end of 1888 in greater discomfort than in Singleton. They were crowded into a small cottage with extra accommodation added as needed. Nothing could ever be better than makeshift. It took, however, long arguments to convince the bishop that his place was utterly inconvenient until at long last he reluctantly agreed to a site

near Lake Wendouree. The long-suffering community thankfully moved into their new monastic home in 1893. By that time Father Halson had also been changed. He was now in the community that had been transferred from Singleton to Waratah, a suburb of Newcastle, where he was to end his days.

He had never been robust and over the years life had made heavy demands on his sickly physique, especially the fourteen years on the Victorian goldfields. Now in Waratah his time was spent mostly in the monastery attending to the needs of the people who came to the church. Perhaps Father Douglas who had hesitated about encouraging his penitent to become a Redemptorist would have seen himself justified. The house records show him not used for the missions of the busy community, but he was well occupied at home preaching and in the confessional. Bishop Moore's «old miner» had given evidence enough of his being a most acceptable Redemptorist.

In 1896 the limited scope of his apostolate was further curtailed by a stroke which was to affect him for the rest of his life. It could be perhaps that these silent years revealed the richness of the character of this old man who had seen so varied a life but remained as simple and devout as he had been since childhood. He had discovered in the end what he had always desired. After his death the diocesan paper spoke of him as having been a source of edification to those who knew him by his patient resignation, humility and charity. He spent eight hours every day before the Blessed Sacrament and never omitted his daily Mass. His life, it seems, had become what he had always desired. As he said for himself, he had even as an Anglican had great veneration for the Sacrament. And patient resignation, humility and charity had always been characteristic of him. For his brother Christian, who was closest to him of all his family he was always «dear Harry».

The end came at the beginning of 1900, and it was a fitting end to his life. On the morning of 15th January having said his Mass and had his breakfast as usual, he was making his way to the oratory for his customary morning visit to the Blessed Sacrament and the Way of the Cross, as had been his practice during the years of his retirement. On his way he fell on the

stairs striking his head as he fell. He was found unconscious and bleeding profusely. Two Brothers took him to his room, where he was anointed by Father Eugene O'Neill. It had been a massive stroke. He remained helpless for a few days until he died peacefully on 19th January. At his requiem Bishop Murray of Maitland and his coadjutor, Bishop Dwyer were present with a large number of diocesan priests and a larger number of laypeople who no doubt had experienced his unfailing kindness in the confessional.

The life of Father Halson was certainly quite extraordinary. It was perhaps the more so by reason of the contrast between his experience of life in various lands, which seems to be the stuff of novels and his character which remained as had been described by all who knew him, gentle, pious and studious. He lived at a time when English life was very much influenced by the Oxford Movement, but it is not easy to see him as one of the Oxford converts. He was certainly not included in the extensive tally of them compiled by a man named Browne in 1861⁶. The author, who counted himself as one of the converts, listed them year by year. Father Halson was outside the scope of the work, but his life was in many respects similar to those whose stories are related by the diligent Browne. His contact with men like Faber and his Oratorians even in his school days according to Christian had an unsettling effect that led to his becoming himself a Catholic and it is likely enough that during his few years in Oxford he was aware of the still evident stirring caused by the events of the 1840s.

Those who knew him most closely, however, never described him as scholarly, perhaps seeing his studiousness rather as devotional, as Christian had said when he spoke of his failing to qualify for the scholarship. Henry would surely have described his religious development as coming from his early teaching under his mother. From her, he said he had received a love of prayer and of the Bible. The man who had traveled so widely and seen military service in the Crimean War and the excitement of the Victorian goldfields is perhaps best described as

⁶ E.G.K. BROWNE, *Annals of the Tractarian Movement, 1842 to 1860*, London 1861.

profoundly contemplative who found his special delight in the *Imitation of Christ*, the *Visits to the Blessed Sacrament* and *Reflections on the Passion* by St. Alphonsus. It is perhaps best to see here the secret of that varied and exciting life in that lifelong contemplation which in the end made Henry Halson remembered for his «patient resignation, humility and charity».

Summary

In this article, the author leads us through each significant phase of Redemptorist Father Henry Halson's extraordinary life and spiritual journey, beginning with an account of his devout Anglican family and the influence of his early schooling and education in the classics at Oxford where he felt the first stirrings of an attraction to Catholicism. We accompany him as circumstances lead him to Turkey and the Crimean War, to Australia where he definitively enters the Catholic Church, then to Canada, to Rome, to the Priesthood and finally to the Redemptorist Congregation which send him as one of its pioneer missionaries to Australia. Throughout this account, one perceives a deeply Christlike personality, the secret of which revealed in Father Halson's life-long love and devotion to the Eucharist initially as an Anglican and then assumed with contemplative fervor as a Catholic convert and Redemptorist Missionary right up to his death.

RESUMEN

En este artículo el autor nos presenta todas las etapas más significativas de la vida extraordinaria y del itinerario espiritual del padre redentorista Henry Halson, a partir del ambiente de su familia anglicana profundamente religiosa y de la influencia que tuvieron en él los primeros años de escuela y la cultura clásica adquirida en Oxford, donde sintió las primeras inquietudes de su atracción hacia el catolicismo. Lo acompañamos siguiendo las vicisitudes de su vida que lo llevan a Turquía con la guerra de Crimea, a Australia donde entra por fin en la Iglesia católica, al sacerdocio, después a Canadá, a Roma y finalmente a la Congregación redentorista que lo envía a Australia como misionero en el primer grupo fundador. A lo largo de todo este relato se percibe una personalidad profundamente centrada en Cristo, que se manifiesta en toda la vida del padre Halson por su amor y devoción a la Eucaristía, comenzando desde cuando era anglicano, y después con el fervor contemplativo de convertido al catolicismo y de misionero redentorista hasta su muerte.