

by Act of Parliament, to efface, for ever, if possible, the Catholic religion in England. And Parsons, look at the thing well; for here you will find the first, the great, and the all powerful, motive for making the Protestant Church, "as by law established." If men had been left without any law to compel them to submit to any particular church, they who had never had an idea of tithes, oblations, or Church land rents, payable to more laymen, never could have long submitted to such payment. Nothing but the axes and the halts, and the fires of Henry the Eighth, could have induced them to submit to this. It was therefore necessary to make another Church; and to give to that Church all the powers, all the exclusive benefits, all the protection, and all the advantages, necessary to make it a valuable thing to those who would necessarily have its patronage exclusively in their hands.

With these motives in their minds, and these objects before them, the nobility, the powerful gentry, to name them by one word, the aristocracy, having got rid of the old tyrant, and his mongrel Catholic religion, resolved to make a new Church, as by law, and a Protestant Church, in order that the Pope might never come and instigate the people to make them restore the landed estates and the tithes, which they had got into their possession by grants from the barbarous old tyrant. In their execution of this design the nation witnessed scenes never before witnessed in the world; such insincerity; such barefaced apostacy; such greediness; such injustice; such defiance of every sentiment of morality, and every sentiment of religion; such prostration of character; as cannot be described by tongue, or pen, except in faithfully relating the facts, and it would be wise in you, Parsons, never to direct our eyes back to the origin of this Church, as by law established. The Catholics assert that their Church originated with Christ and his Apostles; yours originated with the aristocracy of England, whose conduct in the making of this Church, we have now to survey; we have now to look at it in its true colours, be the effects in our minds what they may.

The motives for making the Church I have described; and now we have to see something of the manner of making it.—The first step was by the act of Parliament, 1st year of Edward the Sixth, chapter 1; and in the year 1517. This is an act to punish people for speaking irreverently against the sacrament taken in both kinds, which was contrary to the practice of the Catholic Church. The preamble of the Act tells us that this new practice had been ridiculed by the people "in dialogues, rhymes, songs, plays, and jests." The sharers of the spoil of the Church and the poor were by no means disposed to suffer songs and jests upon the subject. They, therefore, enacted that these rhymsters and singers should suffer "imprisonment of their bodies, and fines, at the king's will and pleasure." Though this was wholly a new thing; quite contrary to the faith and practice of the people and their forefathers for nine hundred years: a new invention, oversetting the main pillar of their faith. This monstrous severity was followed by an enactment, giving a new interpretation to the Holy Scriptures, and containing an assertion laid down by mere laymen, that both the bread and the wine were to be taken. But this was only a little beginning: this was only a foretaste of that which was to come; it was a preparing of the way for the making of this Church, the fate of which is now to be decided.

In the second year of the reign of this boy king (who was now only eleven years old,) who was, at once, supreme spiritual head of the Church, and secular sovereign of the State, this Protestant Church and religion were established. The Roman Catholic religion having been abrogated; having been protested against, and declared to be idolatrous and damnable, all men were let loose to choose for themselves, each having a Bible in his hand. One sect had as much right to the tithes, and the churches, as another sect; but this would never have done for the aristocracy. The remaining tithes, the oblations, the bishop's lands the college lands, these were too valuable to be suffered to be scrambled for; and though the aristocracy had protested against that Church, to which they had belonged, and for the support of which they had been given, still they had no quarrel with the things themselves; they had not protested

against the tithes, and the land, and the oblations, they had only protested against their being in hands other than their own. The Catholic religion was idolatrous and damnable, but they saw nothing either idolatrous or damnable, in the lands, the tithes, and the oblations. These, therefore, they resolved to keep, but to keep them, they must have another Church, and to that Church all must yield tithes and oblations, however contrary its creed might be to the faith which the Scriptures taught them to adopt, or which they had been taught by their fathers from generation to generation. The preamble of the Act of Parliament (1st and 2nd Edward the Sixth) tells us, that "the king in his great goodness, has appointed the Archbishop of Canterbury (Craumer,) and others, to draw, and make, one meet order, rite, and fashion, of common and open prayer. And Administration of Sacraments, to be had, and used, in His Majesty's realm of England and Wales, the which, at this time, by aid of the Holy Ghost, with one uniform agreement is of them concluded, set forth, and delivered to His Highness" (eleven years of age,) "to his great comfort, and quietness of mind, intitled, The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments, and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, after the use of the Church of England. Wherefore, the Lord's Spiritual and Temporal in this present Parliament assembled, considering, as well the most godly travel of the king's highness" (eleven years of age,) "of the Lord Protector, and of other, his Highness's council, in gathering, and collecting the said Archbishop and learned men together, as the godly prayers, rights, and Ceremonies in the said book mentioned; and the considerations of altering those things which he altered, and retaining those things which he retained in the said book, but also the honour of God and great quietness, which, by the grace of God, shall ensue, do give his highness most hearty and lowly thanks for the same."

Bearing in mind this assertion about the aid of the Holy Ghost in this work, let us now come to the enactments. You, Parsons, found the Church's prescriptive rights upon the assertion that there never was any Act of Parliament for taking the benefices away from the Catholics, and giving them to the Protestants; that the Catholic parish-priests were never ousted from their benefices by Act of Parliament; that they became converted in their several parishes; or continued to exercise their several functions as before, till the day of their death; or that they went away from their benefices without force; so that as they had, unquestionably, a prescriptive right to their benefices, the present Parsons stand fairly in their shoes, and have a prescriptive right too. Now, then, let us see how this matter stands. The king had put forth a Book of Homilies and a Catechism. Priests had been permitted to marry; and an Act was soon after passed (2nd and 3rd Edward the Sixth, chap 21) to allow priests to marry. Every inducement had been offered to withdraw the parish priests from their religion; but still, with very few scandalous exceptions, they remained firm in their faith and their practice, at the time of the passing of this Act. The Act, therefore, provided, that, if any rector, vicar, or perpetual curate, or other priest, with benefice should say mass in the usual manner, and not use the Common Prayer Book, he should forfeit to the king one year's revenue of his benefice, and be imprisoned for six months; that for a second offence, he should be deprived of his benefice, and of all his spiritual promotions, and be imprisoned for one whole year; for a third offence, imprisonment during his natural life; that if the priest had no benefice, he should be imprisoned for six months for the first offence; and for the second offence, should be imprisoned for his natural life! Thus did the gentle Christian Church begin; thus did the Angel of Charity, Humanity and Humanity, preside at her birth. But the Act did not stop here; it went on to the laity; and it enacted, that if any one should, by interludes, plays, songs, rhymes, or by other open words declare, or speak anything in derogation, depraving, or despising, the said Book of Common Prayer, penalty, after penalty were to follow, till at last came forfeiture of goods and chattels to the king, and imprisonment during the natural life of the party!

Here we have a faithful account of the BIRTH of this famous Church, which simply put it to the priests and the peo-