

The Inquisition burned the Bible, but the higher critics are tearing it to pieces. And yet there is a craving in the human soul, and especially in the soul which has come into contact with the Gospel, for a moral certainty, for a Divine, infallible authority. We know a case of a distinguished woman, the wife of a French pastor, whose faith was shattered by what she overheard of her husband's conversations with his colleagues on the Bible and its so-called inaccuracies. Intensely religious, the poor woman, thus deprived of her faith in the Bible, found at last what she thought to be a blessed certitude in the fold of Rome, and for ten years before her husband's death she was a Romanist without any one knowing it but her husband and her confessor! Lately, however, she returned to the pure Gospel, confessing on her dying bed that Rome had not given her the promised peace, and she died trusting in Christ as her Saviour.

In France the reasons for this revival of Catholicism are many. The first is, the shallowness and powerlessness of what is called "free thought," with which, at one time, our leading politicians had foolishly hoped to replace the old superstitions. People will rather eat decayed food than nothing. "Free thought," materialism, positivism, agnosticism, or whatever name modern infidelity assumes, is nothing. It gives no hope for the future, no strength for the present. Under the secular influence of the schools a new generation has grown, utterly ignorant of God, and tremendously materialistic. Learning has not been the panacea which it had been hoped it would be. Crime, drunkenness, lawlessness, have increased in proportion with the number of schools. There have been more divorces in France during the past five years than in England in thirty years. Illegal unions are numerous, infanticide common, and there is a decrease in the population of about twenty thousand souls every year.

No wonder that those who think and who retain some love for virtue are afraid of such a state of things, and, for want of a better one, appeal to the Roman Catholic religion as the only power which can stay this tide of immorality, of which she has been the main factor.

Another cause of the Roman Catholic reaction in France is the marvelous skill of the present Pope in adapting himself to modern phraseology and aspirations. History shows us that "Rome never changes," and yet, serpent like, it has a wonderful ability to change its appearance, to insinuate itself in the confidence and love of the peoples by a seeming concession on almost every point of importance to them. The republican form of government, for instance, seems to have rooted itself in the French soil, and to have become a permanent institution in this country; the Pope has issued commands to the French bishops that henceforth they should accept the established government, and not identify themselves, as they had done before, with the dead-and-gone monarchies. What is called the "question sociale"—i.e., the questions of capital and labor, of rich and poor—is agitating the minds of our people, as everywhere. The Pope has carefully prepared an encyclical letter on the question full of liberal sentiments and