

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE PERVERT QUESTION.

A STATEMENT has been furnished us which presents the perverts to Rome question in a light well worthy the serious attention of those who still keep up the stale and unprofitable cry that the advance in ritual made in recent years, and the insistence upon the catholicity and apostolicity of the Church of England by the Oxford movement, have been the sole causes of so many. some years ago, going over to Rome, and which must inevitably, it is affirmed, cause others to take the same step. We have not only absolute confidence in the integrity of the writer of this statement, but are in possession of facts that enable us to vouch for its accuracy.

It is difficult for those not familiar with Church life in England forty years ago, to realize the state into which divine service had fallen in those days. The utter indifference shown by the clergy to their duties as priests, pastors, and teachers would hardly be credited. As we recall the apathy, the slumberous dullness which then hung like a funeral pall over the Church, and remember the skill, the dashing audacity, and the fervor displayed by the Church of Rome in its attempt to regain England, under the leadership of Cardinal Wiseman, *we are amazed at the smallness of the results from an attack so remarkably favored by circumstances*, by our being so wretchedly posted for defence and so unconscious of, and so indifferent about the force of the onslaught.

Whoever comments upon the prisoners of war as it were, made by the Roman troops, who is ignorant of the condition the Church garrison was in, and of the laxity of discipline prevailing in her tents when the assault was made, commits a grievous sin against those laws of honor which should be obeyed by historians, and by all critics of historic events. What reams of letters, pamphlets, articles; what thousands upon thousands of speeches and sermons have been, and are yet being, composed on the perverts to Rome question, by persons whose absolute ignorance of the most important factor in this problem, was and is as the blackness of darkness in its intensity! Our conviction is that the Church of England needs no more to demonstrate her divine life, a life above the accidents, and chances, and conditions of human circumstances, than the marvellous revival which followed upon the tremendous attack upon her made by the Church of Rome in the time of her weakness, and apparent decadence thirty to forty years ago. To speak of those who left us in those troublous days as driven to Rome, or drawn into the camp of Rome, owing to the Church of England raising the standard of ritual, or boldly proclaiming Her Catholic claim, is, in Carlyle's phrase mere "clotted nonsense," fit only for the appetite of bigoted illiteracy.

The wonder is that a Church so dead to duty did not suffer such heavy and irremediable losses as to have left her the vanquished victim of the Papal forces. A century before

what is called "The Presbyterian Church" was swept out of existence in England. Mark the difference! That institution of man's devising died away under the assaults of Deism, but the Church of God even when asleep as to be weakness itself, was so roused by the advance of a foe that it arose in all its divine potency and drew new life from every blow.

The statement condensed to suit our space is as follows.

WHENCE CAME PERVERTS TO ROME?

That the High Church movement has not been wholly responsible for perverts to Rome is proved by the following facts drawn from the personal experience of the writer. In early life I attended a Parish Church wherein I never once saw any part of the service read outside the desk. The vicar usually sat in the vicarage pew, in a black gown, and he closed Morning Prayer in the pulpit. That shows how extremely "Low" we were. There was not a Romanist in the town, which had about 10,000 inhabitants. There was not a High service held within 30 miles. A railway being built brought a number of Irish Catholics for whom a mission was opened in an old theatre, the pit being boarded over. In that place when a boy I first saw Mass celebrated to about a dozen persons. The priest was a charming young man, well bred, a good singer, very "jolly" in company, so he soon had the run of all the society in the district. Church people seldom went to Church, as the services were intolerably dull. That priest in a few years built a Church, organized a choir and had a nice congregation, almost all drawn from Church people, who were driven to Rome by the extreme Low Churchism of the Parish Church.

I knew another Parish Church which was made by the same means to furnish a Romanist Church constantly with a considerable number of attendants at Mass and Vespers. Eventually a number of these became converts to Rome, who were sick and tired of the wretched dullness of Low Church services, and disgusted at the puritanic narrowness and calvinistic bitterness of what was vaunted as evangelical preaching. So much for places, now as to individuals. I saw Mass celebrated at St. Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham, England, some 30 or more years ago, at which three priests assisted, each of whom had been nonconformist preachers. I met one at a friend's on whose invitation I went to this very significant display of the source of perverts! Mass was celebrated at the altar of St. Joseph's, Toronto, some time ago, by a young priest who up to the time of his perversion had never once seen any service in the English Church except of the extreme "Low" type. His family was intimately known to me and all his associations were with extreme evangelicals. A young man known to me by daily sight, who was the son of a very Low Church vicar, suddenly perverted, and is now a R. C. priest. A R. C. priest now near Birmingham, was known to me to have been the son of nonconformist parents of the ultra puritan type. These young men were each of them the victims of Cardinal Newman, who, no doubt, found it an absurdly easy task to knock their low church theories into ruins. One of them, when in argument with me, admitted that although he had recited the creed every Sunday for years, he never even had heard that the Church of England claimed to be a Catholic and Apostolic Church! He said he was taught it was only a Church of the Reformation, and therefore a human institution, like the Odd Fellows, or the Reformation Churches—so-called. Besides these cases of perverts I

could give the names of clergy and laymen who were prevented going over to Rome by men like Dr. Hook, of Leeds, and Dr. Pusey.

It is not probable that I have by mere chance come into personal contact with perverts to Rome from nonconformity and from Low Church circles in a greater number than many other persons have done, but having been interested in the Roman controversy from my youth I have simply kept such facts in my memory as relate to it. It is worth noting that Dr Newman himself was a Low Churchman."

We submit the above statement for the thoughtful consideration of Churchmen of all schools. Those who persist in accusing their brethren who teach the Divine origin and Divine life of the Church, *which is the very essence of High Churchism*, of leading souls to Rome, may well ponder over facts that annihilate the theory on which their accusation is based. A very able evangelical writer, the Rev. Dr. Norton, of Montreal, in his valuable work on "Worship in Heaven and on Earth," very truly says, that if certain religious instincts are not met by one form of worship, those who have those instincts will seek their gratification in forms that do provide for them. The whole worship of the Church years ago was hardly worthy to be called "worship," it was so insufferably wearisome, mechanical, and undevout, *especially in evangelical churches*. *Revolt against the unbearable deadness of divine worship is the true key to the vast mass of cases of perverts to Rome*. We speak not theoretically, but deduce this conclusion from a number of personal instances of perverts whose reasons for going over to Rome we learnt from their own lips.

He who cannot proclaim the Divine life of the Catholic and Apostolic Church of England, has no right to complain if earnest souls abandon the Communion organized, as he teaches, by man, to share the life of a Church which declares itself to be Catholic and Divine!

If the Church of England was founded at the Reformation, if her ministers have not Apostolic orders, if her Sacraments are not all the Church declares, then there is no alternative for a Bible Christian, for a follower of Christ, but to abandon such a falsely styled Church. The majority of perverts to Rome went to Rome chiefly because they had been grossly misled by Low Church teachings, or wearied by Low Church services.

It is now beyond all dispute, it has been demonstrated over and over again, that since the Oxford movement began to extend and to be fully at work, *perversions have ceased and the flow of the tide is from Rome*, which to-day is far weaker in England than when Cardinal Wiseman issued his audacious decree dated from, "The Flaminian Gate," parcelling out the old land into dioceses of the Church of Rome—*which in England is a mere sect and a decaying one*.

—We would call the attention of our readers to the advertisement on the first page, "A Beautiful Gift." It is a gem and a marvel of cheapness.

AN
THAT t
ascrib
imply th
Maker, he w
That the B
sharp confli
also most tru
has been the
orthodox the
affect or ch
physiology
condition, a
at the declar
that more tl
now possess
spoken of a
is not the
mankind. T
Resurrection
Me, though
whosoever l
never die,"
the theory
quence of s
that death
believe on
"though he
spoken of b
sical.

In a serm
Sin," the F
College, an
Oxford, ref
as the caus
of physical

The phy
even so ab
fact so inex
ral growth
of sin. Ch
ence of de
So far from
the early
well as St
that death
when man
longed to
Augustine,
not as mor
by nature,
subject to
Athanasius
law of his
Christian
death as it
penalty of
natural lif
corruption
tal state.
he would
animal. A
this mean
If sin is
Christ is s
the bread
thereof an
bread he
liveth an