

The marvellous conversion of St. Paul from Judaism to Christianity, is one of the best attested facts of history, and at the same time form one of the strongest evidences in support of the Resurrection of Christ, and the consequent truth of the Christian religion. His ardent zeal in the cause of Christ throughout his toilsome and suffering life, and his glorious death in its behalf, help to support the same great truths; and they furnish examples of the highest and best character, for the imitation, as far as circumstances permit, of every Christian man to the end of time.

PEW RENTS.

THE custom of renting pews seems to have taken such fast hold on the affections of some people that a multitude of extraordinary excuses are sometimes made for the purpose of defending the practice. It certainly does seem passing strange that people who will pay a pew rent cannot be brought to make an equal payment under another system in aid of Church finances. And yet there are some parishes where people are mean enough and unchristian enough to spend considerable amounts of money on dress and amusement when the only way to get them to pay anything for Church purposes is to rent the pews. This is one ground sometimes urged why the mediæval practice of pew rents should be continued; and if the pockets of these mean souls were all that had to be considered, there is no question that the defence of the system would be a good one. But there are other considerations which should be paramount, and even in cases of this kind the usual arguments against the system are just as forcible as ever.

There is a parish near Toronto, where we are informed that all the people in it who belong to the church would attend it, would fill it, and all would pay pew rents with the greatest pleasure. Under such circumstances, supposing the representation a correct one, the officials of the parish claim that no possible objection can be urged to the introduction of pew rents. Perhaps one of the best excuses for the system, and which also embraces several of the best safeguards against abuse, is that which is brought forward in reference to the Cathedral of St. Mary's, Edinburgh. A memorial on the subject, signed by nearly three hundred habitual worshippers in the Cathedral, was sent to the Cathedral Board at the close of the year. We have not as yet learned the result. The *Scottish Guardian* gives the memorial in full. It represents that a congregation has been gathered and provision made for their obtaining seats; but that now considerable pressure is brought to bear upon the Cathedral Board with the object of having the whole church free and open, without regard to the congregation attached thereto. Besides the alleged fact that such a step would be alien to the intentions of the founders of the church, who evidently intended to provide for a permanent congregation; the memorialists urge that "large numbers of strangers, the majority of whom do not belong to our communion, and who contribute but little to the maintenance of the church and its services, do and will continue to attend the Cathedral Church where the services are peculiarly attractive. If no provision were, therefore, made for the regular and habitual worshippers, we submit that the effect of this continued succession of strangers—who, not attending regularly, could afford to come early to the services and take up the best places in the building—would be, that in time the habitual worshippers would be driven from the Cathedral Church?"

An equal recognition is asked of the parish and of the diocese, and the memorialists allege that if 700 seats were appropriated to the regular congregation, there would then remain 1,100 seats for the accommodation of strangers. In the memorial no mention is made of the poor, but presumably they are included under the head of "strangers."

There is an important intimation contained in one of the paragraphs of the memorial, which is this: "It must also be recollected that on week days as also on Sunday evenings, the Cathedral Church is free to all; and at Sunday morning and afternoon services, and at the great services of the Church, Good Friday, Christmas, &c., as soon as the organ has begun to play a few minutes before the services begin, all seats then vacant are open to those who may wish to occupy them."

The subject is one, the thorough ventilation of which, may be productive of considerable and extensive benefit.

EXTEMPORANEOUS PRAYER—ITS USE AND ABUSE.

IN one section of the Church of England there has been invincible prejudice against the use of any words of prayer, at least in 'public,' which has not been carefully precomposed. There can be no doubt that the spirit of the Primitive Church feeling on this important subject was thoroughly adverse to what is called, in modern days "Free Prayer;" and catholic principle, in this as in other matters, is quite in accord with the teaching of Holy Scripture. Vain repetitions, verbosity, loose phraseology are clearly condemned in the Holy Word; and the practice of composing prayers beforehand is not only expressly enjoined but taught by the highest authority in Christ's own example. Nothing could well be more horrible in the eyes of a Primitive Christian than the execrable trash which passes current among dissenters from the Church in this country, and in which they seem to revel as swine wallowing in the mire. Among those extremes of evil development which are creating an irresistible reaction towards the other extreme—as it is regarded—of Romanism, none is more powerful in its way than the revulsion and disgust which this trash creates in minds that are at all sensitive to the idea of reverence and the fitness of things under the circumstances of Public Worship. The cry for a liturgy among Methodists and Presbyterians, is but an attempt to stem the current of emigration from their ranks, by affording some material satisfaction to those persons whose whole souls revolt against the careless and contemptuous approach to God which habitual extemporaneous prayer expresses.

If there be this strong feeling, demanding satisfaction, among many who have been used to nothing better, how intense and miserable is the opposition to such irreverence felt by those who have been used to the stately and beautiful wording of a catholic Liturgy! To them a deliberate extemporaneous prayer is nothing short of sacrilege. "Our dissenting brethren" may call as loudly as they like for Church of England Clergymen to take part in their "union societies," and they will gain no response from the best of them, little response from any, as long as they flourish this blot on their proceedings before our eyes. There are some who might take part in "Ministerial Associations," "Bible Societies," "Tract Societies," &c., &c., but they cannot do dishonour to God for the sake of a flimsy alliance with those who habitually dishonour Him by extemporaneous prayer. Even

many of those who now enroll their names in such societies—who take part in Union Prayer Meetings, Sunday School Services—must suffer excruciating pain of heart continually at the outrages upon worship to which their presence exposes their ears.

There is no excuse for such gross carelessness in our approaches to the Most High; scarcely ever does an occasion arise when no preparation is possible. In such exceptional cases, we may expect Divine mercy for our inadequate performances; but under all ordinary circumstances, no such apology or excuse can be admissible. The terrible exhibition of incompetency which many exhibit on public occasions is entirely without adequate cause. An occasional phrase interjected, a brief aspiration, a fervent ejaculation, is all that is ever called for by any occasion, however sudden and unexpected. If only this obstacle of a corrupt practice in Public worship—habitual extemporaneous prayer—were removed; one of the most serious hinderances to some action with our separated brethren—would disappear. They have the remedy in their own hands, and only require to make a consistent use of a principle which they already begin to recognize.

IRISH PULPIT ELOQUENCE.

THE Irish tongue has always had the reputation of singular fluency of speech, and the Irish heart is apt to give to that fluency a peculiar flavour and unction of sincerity and earnestness which exercises vast influence in public assemblies. The typical Irishman is also to be credited with a fervent and poetical temperament which throws a robe of attractive grace about the orator, so gifted in whatever arena he may please to display his powers. It cannot, perhaps, be claimed that the Irish nation is famous in the fields of scientific theory and artistic invention, but in oratory; as on the field of battle, they are famed for brilliancy and effectiveness. *Non omnes possumus omnia*, and, perhaps, some day the Irish element in the British nation may find ample room for legitimate influence, of a kind suited to it, and cease to be a puzzle to British statesmanship. It is questionable whether the Church has yet recognized fully the use of that "arm of the service" in her pulpits; though the existence of its power is readily acknowledged.

It is a curious fact that the pulpit oratory by which Toronto, and to a large extent Canada, has been chiefly moved of late years has been Irish. The names of Dumonlin, Carmichael, Sullivan, and many others exemplify the local talent of that kind among us; but it has been reserved for recent Mission Preachers to establish the eminent reputation of their race in that field of usefulness in the Church. Who does not know how the pulses of many a Toronto congregation has been quickened by the fervid eloquence of Rev. W. S. Rainsford, whose honesty, sincerity, and earnestness are recognized thankfully by many who cannot follow him in his apparently confused and eccentric theology. Following upon him in point of time, how deeply moved was the whole church population, and even protestant dissent, by the wonderful addresses of Mr. Knox-Little. The latter, indeed, is a very Wellington among the pulpit orators of Britain; developing qualities of thought and keen intellect, very unusual among his compatriots. He may be taken as an illustration of the extent to which defects of nature can be overcome by resolute endeavour; for though Liddon—the very prince of pulpit oratory in the English tongue, an "Englishman of the English,"—is *facile princeps* in a