

Current Topics and Events.

CARDINAL NEWMAN.

THE death of Cardinal Newman removes one of the most conspicuous figures of the times from public view. He was, probably, the most distinguished pervert made in this century from the Anglican to the Roman Catholic Church. And by his great moral and intellectual influence he drew many after him in his path of apostasy from the Protestant faith. The judgment of posterity will be, we think, that he was characterized rather by subtlety, refinement and delicacy of mind, than by strength or depth of original thought. He will be remembered chiefly by millions as the author of some of the most exquisite hymns in the language, especially the "Lead, Kindly Light," which is in the hymnaries of almost all the Churches. In his "Apologia pro Sua Vita" he lays bare his very heart, and gives evidence of intense sincerity. Yet from the strange effect on even an ingenuous mind of the moral teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, he seems to have given some ground for the accusation of Charles Kingsley of lack of the transparent candour we would like to see in a man of so saintly a spirit and blameless a life in so many other respects. We have seen also charges of casuistical dealing with other perverts made through his influence that are the result rather, we judge, of the religious environment and atmosphere in which he lived than of any conscious lack of rectitude in the man. His exquisite literary style gives his writings and, especially his sermons, an undying charm. But his mind was reactionary and mediæval in cast. In his fine poem, the "Dream of Gerontius," are some grim images of purgatory worthy of the pen of Dante.

In the following sentences the *Methodist Times* draws a striking comparison between John Newman and John Wesley :

"John Newman was the most influential religious leader of the nineteenth century, as John Wesley was the most influential leader of the eighteenth century. Both men began their careers as Oxford clergymen, but one ended as a prince of the Roman Church and the other as the founder of the most numerous and widespread Protestant community in the world. It is very instructive to note their point of agreement and their points of difference. They agreed in the fundamental conviction that Christianity consists essentially in a living personal fellowship with a living personal God. This is the main point of the most profound theological work Cardinal Newman ever penned, the 'Essay in aid of a Grammar of Assent.' The same vital truth appears everywhere in Wesley's 'Notes on the New Testament.' Newman, as he states in his 'Apologia,' was soundly 'converted' in the Methodist sense of that much-misunderstood theological word, when he was a mere boy, and he never lost his sense of peace with God. That genuine 'conversion' coloured all his thought, and was the real, though often unacknowledged, charm of his life and preaching. A similar 'conversion' was the strength of Wesley's ministry, and, as Rev. Richard Green stated in his recent Fernley Lecture on Methodism, is the condition and explanation of our success. But how is it that the two great English religious leaders, who agreed in their definition of essential Christianity, found themselves ultimately as far apart as the poles? How is it that their successors form at this moment the two most powerful, and at the same time antagonistic, religious forces in the British Empire? The answer to that momentous question is obvious to every one who institutes a careful comparison between Newman's 'Apologia pro Vita Sua' and Wesley's