

Rome. Their position, I thought, rendered any precipitate course wrong. The duty of persons so placed was, as it seemed to me, to renew a study of "church principles" themselves, giving a considerable time to it, but meanwhile renouncing avowedly, as a temptation, what had, till the late judgment, seemed a duty of loyalty—namely, all Anglican 'prepossessions. It would be our duty as openly to discard those principles if they could not stand the test of that renewed study; and, in case they did stand it, then to renounce, at any cost to ourselves, a body which had either practically repudiated them or had never really held them. Robert Isaak Wilberforce (the Bishop's elder brother), whose learning had earned for him the name of the "walking dictionary of the Church of England," after a pause, replied to this effect: "That would be the wise and honest course." I gave two years to that renewed study before I took the final step.

Some of my friends feared that I was at that time in a state of excitement and agitation. That was a mistake; I was much absorbed in it; but it had long been my custom to meditate in a somewhat frigid and merely intellectual way on matters which should probably have been otherwise regarded, because they also involved moral and spiritual issues, not less than intellectual. I was profoundly interested in this after-study—for I saw the greatness of the problem,—but not the least agitated or distressed. I had early stated openly that on the issue of my study depended my discarding "church principles," or realising them in the Roman Catholic Church, which had never ceased to hold them, and with them the full body of Christian truth. To tell this much to my friends seemed a duty of frankness to them, and it also left me more entirely free.

The conclusion at which I eventually arrived was this: that "church principles" were an essential part of Christianity itself, and not an ornamental adjunct of it; and that they were external, not as our clothes are, but as the skin is external to the rest of our body. The Apostles' Creed has affirmed three supreme doctrines which included all others—namely, the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Church. What God had joined it was not for man to separate. God's Church was created when God's revelation was given. When it was still in the future it was distinctly announced in His parables—the chief subject of His preaching,—and in them called generally His "kingdom." She is the temple of the Holy Spirit who descended upon her at the Feast of Pentecost. That Pentecost was no transient gift: it is as permanent on earth as the Incarnation of the Divine Son is in heaven. It is the witness of that Divine Son, and to His whole revelation; and that witness which alone can be borne to the successive generations so long as a Church, organically and visibly as well as spiritually one, affirms the one Truth through the one Spirit. This is what makes schism a grave offence; apart from this the charge would be unmeaning. It was owing, as I saw, to the Church which maintained unity that even the separated religious bodies hold the large portion of Revealed Truth which several of them retain; as it is from our planet itself, which is the great magnet, that all the lesser magnets on the earth derive their magnetic power.

Such were the convictions which I had reached. This is not the place for me to state in detail the reasons which led me to them. Many of them I have set forth in published essays. I am not now dealing with theological argument, but with a religious chapter in my own life. For argument this is not the place. When in earlier times friends of mine had become Roman Catholics, I never felt myself competent to criticise them. I could not feel myself alienated from them; because I soon found out what to them the change had been,—not that they had relinquished any part of their Christianity, but that their belief included much more than before, and was held with much more of reality and certainty, to use the language of Cardinal Manning. My own attachment to the "Anglican Church," as we called it, had been from boyhood that ardent thing which Wordsworth tells us that his love for his country had ever been. If from levity or waywardness, not serious misgiving, any one spoke against it, I was much displeased. I had long thought it a duty to see things largely through her eyes; and certainly the religious body to which a man owes his earliest Christian hope has strong claims upon him, though not the strongest. At the time of the Gorham judgment, for the courts to have stood by the teaching of early times and creeds must have driven a large proportion of the Evangelical clergy out of the national establishment. I remembered Cardinal Newman's celebrated saying—namely, "A separated and national Church must be national first, and after that as orthodox as it can afford to be." To me it was plain that the Anglican Church had been tested and found wanting; and that true loyalty could now be exercised alone toward that Church universal, into which alone, and not into any local Church, the Christian is baptised.

While the Gorham controversy was raging, an eminent statesman read me a sentence in a pamphlet published a few days later. It affirmed that not to repudiate, as a body, a heterodox judgment pronounced by an authority which the Church of England as a body had long since recognised as supreme, was to accept that judgment; and it ended, I think, with words like these: "She has now to choose between the portion of the bride and the mess of pottage." Most of the High Churchmen remained with her. I sided with the minority, and left her. Which class changed their position and which changed their principles? It was those who refused to do the latter whom the world stigmatised as weaklings. It was those who affirmed, and acted on that affirmation, that loyalty was due both to the State in civil things and also to the Church, one and universal, in spiritual things, whom the world pronounced disloyal.

Some of my friends fancied that in my "conversion to Rome" I had been a victim to polemics, for which they supposed me to have a passion. I had nothing of the sort. I had an immense reverence for theology, which (apart from its divine claims) unites whatever is deepest in philosophy, most exalted in poetry, and most fruitful and instructive in history. Polemics, on the contrary, I had always looked upon as a painful and ungracious warfare, from which theology cannot separate itself as long as the Church remains in its

present militant condition. The temper is not a good temper, and many who have fought a good fight in it have been the worse for it.

(To be continued.)

## FOUNDINGS.

IN our issue of the 27th ult. we referred briefly to the Home for Foundlings which had been recently established at Jerusalem by Mother Mary Joseph Aubert. The *Wanganui Herald* of a recent date gives the following additional particulars of Mother Aubert's beneficent enterprise:—The want of some State-supported institution in the shape of a Foundling Hospital has long been felt in New Zealand, where the number of illegitimate births, though not abnormally high, reach very considerable figures, as no less than 834 of such occurred last year. Of these it is quite safe to say a very small percentage will reach adult age, as these unfortunates are looked upon from the hour of their birth as something to be lost sight of as quickly as possible, and are treated in most instances as the real culprits. Is it any wonder so few of them survive the first year or two of infancy, and that "baby farming" is rife despite the efforts of the authorities to make those undertaking the charge of children register their places, and submit them to official inspection? It has been left for a woman to start a properly conducted Home for these unfortunate babes, whose care with her and those associated with her is a labour of love. The Home is situated at Jerusalem, a settlement some fifty miles up the Wanganui River, and was started by Mother Mary Joseph Aubert, whose good deeds are so well-known in all parts of this Island. Mother Mary found the money for everything required from her own private purse, and has never had any monetary assistance either from the State or the Church of which she is so useful a member. She, we understand, got the ground and paid for the building of the Home from her own funds, and has had ample proof that her good work in taking in and caring for the children of unfortunate mothers and unprincipled fathers is recognised as that of a good Samaritan. But the good Mother's means are not equal to the demand on them in this matter, as she has at present no less than 80 young children in the Home, whose keep and clothing cost more money than her private funds can supply; to say nothing of an enlarged building to accommodate the growing number of infant inmates and the Sisters who attend on them so sedulously. The public having learnt that funds were badly wanted, several donations have been handed to Mother Mary Joseph Aubert, who, in another column, thanks the donors for their timely assistance. It is quite safe to say that if these little ones had not been taken by her and cared for so well, the majority of them would have died of neglect, if not worse, as the death-rate among illegitimates is appallingly high. The value of such a Home from a moral point of view is very great, as it gives an unfortunate mother of an illegitimate child a chance of getting employment and redeeming her past mistakes, whereas if she had to either board the infant or keep it herself she would in nine cases out of ten have to choose between the river and the streets. Of course the Jerusalem Home is unable to accommodate a tithe of the children whom Mother Mary Joseph Aubert is constantly being entreated by broken-hearted young mothers to take charge of, and it is certain the fate of those who are not cared for at the above institution or other equally good home is, in nine cases out of ten, a sad one, as starvation and neglect are the usual portions of these victims of others' transgressions. The State should, therefore, establish a few foundling homes, and subsidise any, like that at Jerusalem, which are doing good work, and lessening the awful mortality among illegitimates, who suffer for the sins of others, and are the innocent victims of a sham system of morality which punishes the duped mother and her helpless offspring, and allows the heartless seducer to go about free adding to his victims. If there were more women like Mother Mary Joseph Aubert, who shows a deep and human sympathy for erring women and their innocent babes, there would be fewer girls led astray and driven on to the streets, as it is the harshness of women towards women which makes it so hard for one of them who has erred to retrace her steps, and obtain employment in any respectable establishment. Generally it is impossible, unless they can get rid of the evidence of their lapse from virtue, and get away to a strange place where their misfortune is not known. This in itself is a strong temptation to many unfortunate girls to make away with their babes, or to abandon them in the hope that some kind-hearted person will take them in, and care for them—a very rare occurrence, as they are generally taken before the S.M. Court, and committed to Burnham or some similar and utterly unsuitable institution for a number of years, during which, if they live, they will have ample opportunities of learning evil from those who are sent to such places for their vices, and who take a delight in contaminating others. We commend Mother Mary Joseph Aubert's efforts to provide a Home for young children, where they will be well cared for physically and morally, and brought up to be useful and respectable members of the community. To assist with funds or useful articles of food, clothing or other things of which the Home is in want is to help a most meritorious institution, and to widen its utility, to say nothing of gladdening the hearts of those self-sacrificing Sisters of Mercy who undertake its charge.

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