

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN CANADA

In the *GUARDIAN* of March 2nd, we gave some figures as to the membership and number of communicants in the Church of England in the Ecclesiastical Province of Canada, compiled from the Year Book of the Church of England. Since preparing the same we have received with much pleasure a copy of "the Year Book and Clergy list of the Church of England in the Dominion of Canada" for 1892, issued by Joseph P. Clougher, publisher, of Toronto, which marks a new departure. The book is got up in a style somewhat similar to the Living Church Quarterly, and contains a considerable amount of information. It is embellished with a portrait of The Most Rev. The Metropolitan of Canada, and cuts of Christ Church Cathedral, Fredericton, Christ Church Cathedral Montreal, and St. George's and Trinity Churches in the same city. It also purports to give a complete list of the Canadian Clergy, and an epitome of the history of the various Dioceses, for which, however, too much reliance would seem to have been placed upon the Year book of the S. P. C. K.

Comparing the figures as given by us, and above referred to, with those in this Year Book, just to hand, we find that the result is as follows:—

	Members	Communicants
Nova Scotia, including P.E.I.	70,192	11,630
Fredericton	66,768	6,790
Quebec	As given	
Montreal	As given	
Ontario	Not given	
Toronto	Not given	
Niagara	29,517	7,100
Huron	59,414	13,605

There is a striking difference in the figures as to this latter diocese, in regard to which explanation might be given.

In the Province of Rupert's Land the Statistics of the actual number, or estimated number, are wanting, except in the dioceses of Moosonee and Qu'Appelle, in the former of which 4,000 Church members are reported, with a Communicant list of 700; and in the latter 5,732, with a Communicant list of 1,174. The statistics from the dioceses on the Pacific Coast are also lamentably insufficient: only in that of Columbia is the number of Communicants given, namely 996.

REVERENCE.

There are certain good Christian dispositions which some people seem to look upon as dispensable virtues—very good things to have, but not absolutely necessary to the Christian character. In the estimation of many people reverence is one of those virtues which can be dispensed with. When we are told of some very irreverent language used by one who should know better, people are apt to excuse him by saying that he is a very good man, but he has no reverence. We do not wish to draw the line too sharply, but feel inclined to ask, Can there be a good man, in the higher Christian sense, who has no reverence? It seems to us that it is very questionable. How can a man apprehend the character of God—how can he know Him and Jesus Christ whom He has sent—without reverence? He may be betrayed into irreverence by forgetfulness, but not realizing what he is saying; but surely if he knows God there must

be times in his life when he is filled with awe and reverence. It is human nature to be reverent towards what we respect. Earthly grandeur and dignity inspire respect, so must, of necessity, the knowledge of God; and this feeling must be deepened by the consciousness of our own sin, and the distance it places between us and Him. We cannot, therefore, believe in the excuseableness of irreverence, or treat reverence as a dispensable virtue.

We have met very few people who had not reverence for something. Great physical prowess inspires the admiration and reverence of some men who would be incapable of respecting intellectual strength; while with others talent covers a multitude of sins, so that what in their eyes would be a crime in an ordinary human being is a trifling fault in a genius. Authors, painters, musicians of genius are revered often with a reverence not extended to sacred things, and this in spite of traits of character calculated to inspire contempt. But does not this want of reverence of which we complain arise from ignorance? If they knew the character of God and His glorious attributes would they not reverence Him and everything connected with Him too?

True reverence must be spontaneous and not artificial. The reverence that is merely artificial does not deserve that name. To bow the head when the heart does not bow, is no more reverence than a lifeless form of prayer is devotion; but to the true reverence of the heart the bowing of the head and the attitude of devotion are often the natural expression of the inward emotion, and are the fruit of holy joy that words fail to express. This indeed is true worship.

Need we say that reverence is peculiarly appropriate, is indeed indispensable, to the worship of God in the sanctuary. If it is missed anywhere it is here. We admit that there is a great change in this matter within the last forty years, but there is still room for improvement. Who that has reverence in his heart can help being pained at the absence of reverence to be found in some of our congregations—the lolling attitude, the gaping indifference, and the unbended knee, too often offend those who come to church to worship God. There may be an artificial reverence, which is like the whitened sepulchre, a mere matter of form and church propriety, and which covers a formal godless spirit, but you certainly cannot have true worship and devotion associated with irreverence of behavior and carelessness of manner.

But is the irreverence in the House of God confined to the congregation? Is it never found in the prayer-desk? We wish we could say so. Alas! there is sometimes an irreverence in the hasty and careless performance of divine service by the clergy both in England and Ireland, which, from their exemplary position, becomes all the more injurious and more reprehensible. We do not plead for long drawn out services, but we must in the interest of the reverent worship of God deprecate the appearance of haste in the performance of acts of public worship. This haste is sometimes observable in the reading of the Psalms, where they are read and not sung, by the clergyman beginning his verses before the congregation have finished theirs, obviously for the purpose of getting through them as quickly as possible. If the service is too

long, by all means curtail it, by leaving out a portion, but let what is retained be performed with reverence, and not with such indecent haste.

Another occasion in which we have often been hurt by irreverence is in the ascription of praise at the conclusion of the sermon. We have known in the old time clergymen make a practice of selecting this moment for the use of their pocket-handkerchief, and even if that practice does not now obtain, there is often still quite too much of a perfunctory character in the way the words are given out, which the change of position or attitude is sufficient to correct. The ascription of praise to God should at all times be offered with deliberation and solemnity, and if not so done it had better not be done at all.

Irreverence is sometimes most offensively apparent in the treatment of Scripture. How often do we find people indulging in jokes about Scripture that have but little humor, and whose sole merit consists in their profanity. To some people this is quite a sufficient substitute for wit, and will in itself be provocative of laughter.

Apocryphos of this subject, a most objectionable practice has sprung up of late in literature, particularly in magazine articles and leaders in newspapers, of using the language of Scripture as a convenient form to express ideas on the most common subjects. It does not seem to matter to these writers that the Scripture so abused may be expressive of the holiest verities of the Christian faith if it serves their purpose. We are inclined to attribute a good deal of this irreverence to the prevalence of American literature, Yankee wit being often largely composed of profanity.

One of the great evils of joking on Scripture subjects is that whenever the text which suggested them is met, the joke inevitably starts to the memory, perhaps to shatter some holy thought or divine lesson. The remembrance of this result should make us all careful not to repeat jokes of this description, and if we have the misfortune to hear them, not to extend to others the injury which we have received ourselves, by putting them into circulation. There are various passages of Scripture which to this moment the writer never hears without jokes starting up, which he heartily wishes he had never heard.

We admit it requires self-denial to resist the opportunity of retailing irreverent jokes, which are sure to create a laugh, but it is a self-denial which we should endeavour to practise, remembering the evil consequences which may follow the indulgence. Every such joke is a seed of irreverence, the fruit of which may be open profanity, and ultimately moral degradation, and we believe it to be the duty of every Christian man and woman to discountenance irreverence as a poisonous influence in the Church. We may all have transgressed in the matter, but let us be ready to acknowledge it before our brethren and before God. Let us never look upon it as a trivial offence, or suppose that irreverence can be innocent, but rather treat it as a sin which, like all sin, needs confession and pardon.—*Irish Ecc. Gazette.*

Epitaph in Naddeston Church.

Here lies I at the Chancel door,
Here lies I becau-e I'm poor,
The further in the more to pay,
Yet here lies I as warm as they.

From *Henry's Drive through England*.