

## THE CHURCH IN CANADA.

[COMMUNICATED].

IT is not difficult to see that a great deal which has been written on the state of the Canadian Church has been affected by personal and local considerations. The pessimists, for different reasons, seem to make the worst of things; the optionists, under different influences, are resolved to make the best. Neither class is consciously misrepresenting, yet neither is describing things exactly as they are. An attempt will here be made to bring forward undoubted facts and to show them, as far as possible, in relation to other facts in the condition and history of the Canadian Church.

Let us begin by a brief reference to statements already before the public. It is quite true that the Church of England started with everything in her favor in Canada, and that she has not kept her place. It is not true that she is a bad fifth or sixth now. She is not lower than a third below the Roman Catholic. Figures are proverbially fallacious, and it is generally agreed that English Churchmen are less addicted to "cooking" reports than some other communions. When we cannot entirely trust to figures, we can fall back upon broad tangible facts which are beyond dispute. But first, let us see how far the Church of England had a fair start, or more or less than this, in the Dominion of Canada.

In the first place, then, nothing can be more unsound than the defence, made by a correspondent in the English *Church Times*, that the Churchmen of Canada are more numerous in proportion to the population than those of the United States. After the revolution the American Church, as being generally English in sentiment, had everything against its progress. In Canada almost everything favored the Church. All the men in authority, or nearly all, in the army, in civil offices, in the governing bodies, were members of the English Church.

One circumstance, however, has been overlooked by the pessimists. It is quite true that the immense progress made by the Methodists has been mainly a consequence of the indifference and lukewarmness of English Churchmen. But the same cannot be said of the Presbyterians. In the first place, the established Church of Scotland originally had privileges in Upper Canada. In the second place, some of the very best of our Canadian immigrants and settlers were Scotchmen and Presbyterians. If the "middle class" of Canada were to be carefully analyzed—and nearly the whole population of Canada is, more or less, "middle class"—it would be found that its very backbone was made up to a large extent of Scotch Presbyterians, some of whom by the way, have become members of the English Church. Now, it can hardly be denied that Presbyterianism has generally been found more congenial to the middle class than Episcopacy. No doubt, there has taken place a very considerable change in this respect, during the past few years. But even at this present moment in England the strength of dissent is in the

middle classes, while the Church mostly retains the upper and lower.

Whatever may be the rationale of these facts (and many reasons will suggest themselves to the mind), the facts are undeniable, and they have told against the Church in Canada. And they have told most of all in the country places, in which it is generally allowed that the Church is not holding her own. There are no poor (or very few) in Canada to be taken care of by the parson of the parish; and if there were, the parson has not the power of taking care of them. Then the ordinary farmer is deeply leavened with the middle class Puritanism of England and Scotland, and finds its affinities stronger with Presbyterianism and Methodism than with Episcopacy.

But here we have introduced another element. We have, in a brief and imperfect way which could easily be worked out, accounted for the strength of Presbyterianism, by the predominance and importance of the Scottish element and by the adaptation of this form of religion to middle class sentiment. But it cannot be said that Methodism is to be accounted for in any such manner. Methodism never had any strong hold upon the Scotch, is, theologically, far more widely removed from Presbyterianism than from the Church of England, and (to speak plainly) is disliked by the better class of Presbyterians more than the Church of England.

How, then, do we account for the progress of Methodism? Of course the first answer is, (1) the indifference and lukewarmness of the English Church. This and other points will be considered in detail hereafter. (2) The difficulty of providing clergymen, especially for outlying districts. (3) The elastic organization of the Methodist body for mission work. (4) The uniformity of social level among members of the Methodist body. (5) The loose organization of the English Church, and the slovenly manner in which the system is worked.

Other reasons will appear hereafter. But these are very considerable to start with, and need to be carefully examined, not only as helping us to understand the present state of things in Canada, but as leading to suggestions for the improving of this condition and for the recovery of the ground which the Church has lost.

The subject of our indifference and lukewarmness must be considered in another connection, although these characteristics might account for many more. At present we must, for a moment, contrast the well-knit and aggressive organization of Methodism with the lax and feeble order and action of Anglicans. The Methodists, like the Roman Catholics, seem to have their eyes upon every spot in the Dominion. They know where there is a growing population. They do their best to be first in the field; and often have secured the whole population of a district before the Church has become aware that there was any population to secure.

Examples could easily be given. But there is something worse than this. English church-

es of some size and importance are allowed to stand unserved and shut up for many weeks at a time. Sometimes, no doubt, this is done because a congregation has behaved badly to a clergyman—not a very uncommon case—but this theory will not cover all the facts. Not long ago a clergyman went from one place to another, parting from his people in the most friendly spirit. Not only was there no clergyman immediately appointed to the parish, but for many weeks the church was closed, or opened only when some clergyman happened to be staying in the neighbourhood. The bishop did nothing, the rural dean did nothing. But, it may be asked, what could be done? The answer is, something might very easily have been done. This parish was not in the Northwest or in Algoma, where missions may be twenty-miles apart. There were clergymen within reach who might have given up one of their own services, and supplied the wants of this bereaved congregation either once on a Sunday or once a fortnight, but nothing of the kind was attempted.

From neglect of this kind the natural consequences follow. English Churchmen, however attached to their communion and its offices, will begin to feel that they must somehow and somewhere join in public worship and hear the word of God preached, and they attend other churches, and become attached to their ministers, and perhaps they do not care greatly for the new clergyman when he arrives, and so the Church loses a member, perhaps a family, and never recovers them.

On this point, if it seems desirable, a good deal may be said. We are here touching at the very kernel of our malady. There is some difficulty in making the nature of the case quite clear. It is impossible, in adducing examples, to give names of persons, or localities, or even, in some cases, of dioceses. This only may be premised—that no case shall be brought forward the authenticity of which has not been carefully investigated, and that in offering opinions, as distinguished from facts the reasons upon which they are based will be carefully stated.

## WITNESSES OF THE RESURRECTION.

THE words recorded in the Gospels as the report of the women who had returned from the sepulchre of the Lord, might be regarded as tinged with mental excitement, and with feminine credulity. Yet the import of the words themselves deserved more consideration than that they should be treated as idle tales. The tidings, that the Lord was risen, purported to have been received from two men in shining garments, who had called to remembrance how He Himself had said, while He was in Galilee, that He should be crucified, and rise again the third day. Now the disciples had heard these words from the lips of Jesus: and if they were disposed to treat lightly the calling of them to remembrance, it may serve to show to what an extent their faith in Him as the Christ had been shaken. It would

appear, that one of them them all: "should have following of a mistake, of We know ho long-cherishe sanguine exp by stern rea region of ou vined us bel sunlight colc binations of have lost th reproach in happy if oth how deeply had the dre sepulchre b disciples' ho give never t "We believ Christ, the would they that they h His saying: bury them i which must that is now bitter confe and the dete life, made s conceive th been the er ers would l It was po example i ardent am for Him to and that prophecy, of His wo another ar these resou any even a of the resu of promis words. H His memo had been to have b Their con had fainte such men and scatte being whi have reco and as th is simply more ha tomb. V disappoint the victor and proc Mere stre fice for ti ready to and had trial. T