

THE LITANY AS A SEPARATE SERVICE.

WHILE permission has been wisely given to use the Litany separately, it has been practically found that it does not contain all the elements of a complete service. As its reading admits of a division into two parts at the words, "O Christ hear us," which are repeated in response, and which close the prayers offered to God the Son, we would suggest the insertion of the following, or a similar rubric:—"Here may follow one or more hymns, at the discretion of the minister of the parish, together with one of the appointed lessons from Holy Scripture and a sermon, or homily, with an offertory; the service being closed with the invitation, 'Let us pray,' and the remaining portions of the Litany."

This would make a most edifying and instructive service, lasting from 25 to 45 minutes, and could not fail to be appreciated by Churchmen generally. And we venture to suggest it as a subject quite worthy of the consideration of the Provincial Synod at its present session.

THE CONCEPTION OF OUR RELIGIOUS EQUALITY OVERPOWERS SOCIAL DISTINCTIONS.

MR. GREEN, in his "History of the English People," writes, that one of the gains that arose out of the Puritan rule, was the new conception of social equality. "Their common call," he writes, their common brotherhood in Christ annihilated, in the mind of the Puritan, that overpowering sense of social distinction which characterized the age of Elizabeth. The meanest peasant felt himself ennobled as a child of God. The proudest noble recognized a spiritual equality in the poorest saint."

As we read this, are we not reminded that the same spirit was characteristic of the Church in its purest ages? And may we not say that even now, wherever true belief of the Catholic Faith prevails, there are to be found, also, many indications of the same tendency? For, instance, in the Catholic revival that has reanimated the Church of England during the last half century, one of the first outcomes, one of the first requirements of Catholic teaching was the abolishment of pews. This was the Ritualistic expression of the belief in the truth, that, all men were equal before God, and all social distinctions, for the time being, put on one side. And so far, or so true is the above principle an outcome of true Catholic teaching that, just according to its prevalence in any congregation, one can tell whether "Ritualism" so-called, has been the result, the necessary and legitimate expression of the faithful and full reception of the Catholic faith in the Church and its sacramental character and work, and an indication of the religious fervor that animates it; or whether it has been adopted from merely æsthetic motives, or as an attraction, or as something that will "draw." In congregations of the former class, the poor will be found worshipping side by side with the rich, "partakers of one cup." Works of charity will abound, and a spiritual and reverential atmosphere will be prevalent. On the other hand, in the latter class, while there may be much alms to the poor, the alms will be gathered and distributed by the officials, and in an official (and that is, oftentimes, not an inoffensive) manner. You will not see the rich going about to relieve the poor directly by their own hands, or to see their distress with their own eyes, and in their churches you will not find the poor mingling for worship with the rich, or with that confidence that indicates that God's house is their

house, their Father's house as much as it is their richer neighbor's, or, perhaps, we should say, their rich patron's, as being more expressive of the relation that the one class bears to the other in such congregations.

When we think this matter over, must not our reflections agree in affirming by word and in deed, that where true religion prevails in our congregations, worldly distinctions, while not abolished necessarily, will be made as little obtrusive as possible.

THE COMMUNICANT TEST.

IT was evident that the Synod of Toronto, at its late meeting, was not prepared for a calm consideration of the proposal that none but communicants should have the privilege of voting at the election of Lay Representatives. However desirable such a rule may be, it is one which should be adopted only on broad grounds of duty and principle, and not merely as an expedient for removing a special abuse, however intolerable that abuse may be. It is to be regretted that the question was, for the most part, regarded from the latter point of view, both by those who advocated and by those who opposed the restriction, and we can scarcely wonder that, under these circumstances, the proposed change in the constitution encountered, from many quarters, strong and indignant opposition. It seemed to be assumed by many who advocated the change, that it would affect only a class of persons, whom all alike acknowledge to be a disgrace to any religious community, and utterly unworthy to have a voice in its proceedings; men, who, at the instigation of a party, will combine to out-vote the legitimate members of a congregation, and will, without scruple, declare themselves to be habitual worshippers in churches which, perchance, they have seldom entered. It was felt by many who opposed the change that it would affect a far larger class than this; a class markedly different from it, composed of men generally worthy of respect, as men of decent lives and of upright and honorable conduct; it was felt, too, that such persons were very hardly dealt with, if they were to be subjected to a penalty, incurred by acts in which they had no participation, and which they would regard with scorn and abhorrence. It became quite clear, therefore, that unless some better reason could be assigned for the change than the scandals which had occurred at certain Easter meetings, it could never be accepted; and that on grounds of equity and righteous dealing, because it would involve in one common penalty and disgrace, with a guilty minority, a far larger number of persons not chargeable with the like offence. We must then enquire on what grounds a change, which affects so many more than those whose misconduct suggested its proposal, is to be justified. Various expedients, more or less elaborate, and clogged with conditions, embarrassing if not impracticable, had been proposed, discussed, and rejected, until it became apparent that walls daubed with untempered mortar would not long stand, that definitions of church membership of human devising would not serve any good purpose, and that, if a confessed scandal were to be brought to an end at all, this could be effected only by falling back on old Church lines, recognizing sound Church principles, and declaring, without fear or favor, whom only we are authorized to regard as maintaining unimpaired their status of external membership in the Church of Christ. When the necessity of so acting, in view of the existing evil, was once admitted, it necessarily became evident

that the principles in question demanded from us recognition for their own sake, without reference to any accidental benefit which might result from their assertion, and that there was consequently no force in the objection that in recognizing them, we should be doing far more than is either required or warranted for the removal of the alleged abuse. The change proposed was spoken of as one which would work widely and most disastrously—as one which might be regarded as revolutionary.

Let us consider, then, what are its wide and ulterior results. It affects, most unquestionably, a very large number of persons, who may, I think, for the purpose before us, be distinguished into two classes.

First a smaller class, consisting of persons who should be regarded with peculiar sympathy, men of religious principle and feeling, probably constant worshippers in our churches, who, whether from some defect in early teaching, or from some singular misconception of the purpose for which the Lord's Supper has been ordained, or of the responsibility involved in its reception, abstain from presenting themselves as communicants. So far as I understand the feelings of such persons, I believe that they are sorrowfully conscious of occupying a position which disqualifies them for taking an active share in Church matters, and that they would be little disposed to question the propriety of a rule which excludes them from exerting an influence; to which they are already satisfied that they have no legitimate claim. What they would deprecate would be the harsh and inconsiderate judgment which would class them indiscriminately with "the unholy and profane." They would desire to be told with tenderness, "We do not seek to close against you a door which we regard ourselves as authorized to open, much rather we most deeply regret that you are excluding yourselves, not so much from the lower privilege, from which we may seem to be shutting you out, but from far higher privileges to which the door is opened wide, and by accepting which you would become formally qualified for those offices of trust, for which you appear, even now, to possess so many moral requisites." There is, I conceive, little reason to anticipate any serious misconception of the grounds on which we proceed, in the instance of the comparatively few devout persons, who stand in this distressing position of doubt and perplexity.

There is, again, a much more numerous class, which this rule would affect, and in respect of the persons who constitute it, I think that the enforcement of the rule would be a simple act of charity. Very many now "profess and call themselves Christians," whom we cannot deem to have, in the sight of God, a valid title to that name. If their defect lies only in that inward disposition of the heart which God alone can judge, man may not adventure to take cognizance of it; but when it consists in the overt and deliberate neglect of an external act of Christian duty, when we have to exclude only in the sense of reminding the offender that he has already excluded himself, and that we refuse to recognize him as retaining a position which he has himself deliberately abandoned, our duty must be plain. The world in the Church is very lenient in dealing with such persons. They are, perhaps, "in society," or, if they enjoy not that privilege, they are well-esteemed in some circle of their own, and it is accounted to be a matter of very inferior importance, whether they are, in the sight of God and by the law of Christ, maintaining their fellowship with the Christian Church. The class of which I speak are not communicants, not because