

CONTEMPORARY CHURCH OPINION.

The Church utters a timely warning when it says:—

There is a very common exhortation or admonition, and it is common because the need for it is so generally felt; the admonition runs somewhat in this way: According to the custom of the period, many persons will go away for rest or recreation, some for a few days, and others for weeks or months. It has been observed that not a few in thus going away forget to take their religion with them, and, accordingly they adopt the customs of the most thoughtless or the most worldly whom they may happen to meet. Exhortation and admonition are called for; the law of God applies to a man not only when he is at his usual place of residence, but when also he is at the seaside, or in the mountains, or in the distant West, or in the gayest and freest of European capitals. Morality and religion are not dependent upon the circumstance of time or place. They are universal and eternal. They are not merely comely and appropriate, but they are absolutely essential. They rest upon the deepest wants of man and upon the highest authority of God. They may be forgotten or renounced, but in respect to whomsoever this is done, the character is injured, and besides, the fair order of the world is harmed, and God Himself is dishonored. If any would not wound their own consciences, if they would be true to the nature God has given them, and to the law which He has made known—if they would not make that which is most sacred in the world a thing of contempt and scorn—let them be true to their convictions and to God. Whatever their associations and wherever their abode, let them "Fear God and keep His commandments."

The Standard of the Cross says:—

It is among the vulgarest of errors to confound the modern phase of Methodism with Wesleyanism of the Eighteenth Century. It goes without saying that they are *not convertible terms*. No advocacy, however adroit and clever, can obliterate the sharp line of demarcation between the religious system founded by John Wesley, and Methodist denominationalism—fruit of Protestant Dissent—without discarding first principles, and covering up the real facts of the facts of the case.

The Church News (Natchez, Miss.) gives the following as part of Assistant Bishop Thompson's address: every word of which is applicable to many a *Canadian* parish:—

Some of our oldest parishes are asking help from the Domestic Board now, and, when once granted, a parish calculates upon it, and is slow to give it up. Such help should be surrendered as soon as possible, as a point of honor. And our people should be plainly and frankly taught there is no mine, or mint, or bank vault in the hands of our Missionary Committee in "the North." No dollar can come out of the Treasury until some one first puts a dollar in.

The Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette says:—

The Evangelical Bishop of Exeter, Dr. Bickersteth, in his Primary Charge, made a strong plea on behalf of daily prayers, open churches, weekly communions, and, we regret to add, evening celebrations. His Lordship did not defend this last innovation by any reliable argument. As far as we can read Church history, the evidence is all the other way. Certainly Pliny's well-known letter should be decisive as to the practice of the primitive Christians. The evening communions of the Corinthian Church are referred to by St. Paul for the purpose of censure rather than approval, and the evils he rebukes are the very evils likely to be reproduced in the present day. *There is no authority for the observance of late communions in our Church, and the innovation is*

just as strong as the insisting on fasting communions. Dr. Bickersteth's declaration in favor of toleration in ritual does credit to his head and heart.

The Church Helper (Western Michigan) says:—

The Millennium may be very near, yet one finds it really hard to believe in its nearness when one notes that, almost without exception, the introduction into any religious body of any proposition looking to the reunion of Christendom at once reveals the latent elements of disagreement in such body.

The Family Churchman says:—

The Trinity ordination at St. Paul's was marked by the unusual feature that the Bishop himself preached the sermon. This is one of Bishop Temple's happy innovations which we seriously commend to other Bishops. No one can speak to candidates as they ought to be spoken to at such a time better than the Bishop. He had examined them, tested them, discovered their weaknesses, and can speak words in season with a directness and force which is impossible to any other person, however eloquent. The sermon at Ordination is as much the Bishop's function as the address at Confirmation.

IRISH METHODISM.

The history of Irish Methodism deserves to be written out carefully and at length; all that is here attempted is the briefest possible sketch. The Irish Methodists did not share in the disturbed state of feeling which led to the momentous innovation of 1795 in England. They were satisfied with their parish churches, which were rarely if ever opened in the evening. They were on good terms with the clergy, and a little reflection will serve to explain this fact, as Protestants in Ireland, scattered and numerically weak, are necessarily driven nearer together in face of the majority, who were, and are still, of a different race and form of religion. Hence the Methodists were content to assemble themselves in their modest meeting-houses on the Sunday evenings, and at their classes during the week, and the clergy were content that they should remain so. And when this is carefully considered, there is no reason why clergymen should be jealous of a religious organisation which presupposes that all its members are steady church-goers. The doctrines of the Methodists were not to be challenged—they were those of the leading Anglican writers; and as long as they really walked in the footsteps of John Wesley they deserved esteem and fellowship, and they everywhere received it. It is to be hoped that someone who has leisure and opportunity for the task will some day write the annals of original Methodism, as it remained in Ireland, down to the disruption of the year 1816. In that year there was the culmination of an open division of opinion, resulting in a "split." A section of the Irish Methodists demanded that the English rule of 1795, which enabled unordained preachers to act as though they had the full authority of the clerical order, should be extended to them. Another section—the smaller—declared for the original plan, according to which the parish church was resorted to. This important dispute came before the Conference, which body made very much the adjudication it had made in 1796. The preachers were, in certain cases, authorised to administer the Sacraments, but the people were not required to go to them for that purpose; on the contrary, every member was distinctly told that he was "free to communicate where he pleased." The minority, who were really

Church people, regarded this as a serious infraction of the fundamental rule of Methodism, and claiming to walk in the old paths, they became the "Primitive Methodists" of Ireland. A few years ago they numbered some ten thousand. Their preachers limited themselves to preaching, and once a year all these met together at a cathedral (St. Patrick's Dublin), in recognition of their special place within the Church. Later still there was another change, which may be described as the absorption of the larger part of these Irish Primitives in the main Wesleyan body. Those who still remain in the old traditional paths are not many, but they are to be found in some places, and they form, as their predecessors did, an inner circle in the Church—as the Carmelites or Franciscans do in the Roman Catholic Church. They still uphold Wesley's rule, that an unordained preacher has no right to infringe on the domain of the ordained, while they hold their private meetings for devotion and mutual edification free from parochial control. One of the Bishops is (or lately was) the president of their community. They are, I believe the only representatives of original Methodism, as Wesley founded it. I am not aware of any "Primitive Methodists" in England. There are thousands of people who call themselves such, but they have no claim to the designation, and they only represent a modern split from the main Wesleyan body. It is rather singular that in these days of multiplying guilds and associations of all kinds some good people who admire the character and work of Wesley do not form an inner circle in the Church, following the rules of Wesley. They would be really Primitive Methodists of the original stamp, and such as their founder would have loved to see.—*R. Denny Urtin, in Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette.*

THE Indian and Colonial Exhibition is still attracting crowds of visitors. A leading English newspaper pronounces it the most attractive exhibition that London has ever witnessed. To the Queen herself, unable as her Majesty has been to make a personal tour of her vast dominions, the wonderful display must have proved little less than a revelation; and the impression which must have been produced upon the mind of the Sovereign will be shared during the ensuing months by hundreds of thousands of her subjects. We may indeed predict that the world in general, and Englishmen in particular, will learn more this year than has ever been possible before of the present and prospective greatness of that Greater Britain which lies outside of the United Kingdom. The British public will be alone to blame if in future juster ideas are not entertained of the attractions and capabilities of the regions which await the expenditure of capital and labor from the Old Country, and upon whose progress, in all that constitutes national greatness, our Imperial wealth and strength so greatly depend.

A lady subscriber writes:—"I should like to thank you for giving us Church news at such a cheap rate, and wish for the good of the Church that your paper were more generally taken here. There is no doubt that the circulation would greatly increase if the clergy would but exert themselves, but they do not appear to realize how much help a good Church paper would be to them in their parishes, by stirring the people up to take an interest in Church matters."—Some of the clergy have rendered us valuable assistance; will not others do so, too? We recognize, however, the difficulties in their way.