

Do Away with Parties and Cliques.

SIR,—Everyone, I think, will admit that in the Diocese of Toronto the Church is losing its hold upon the hearts of the people—I am speaking of the country districts, as distinguished from cities like Toronto or Peterborough, and a few of the larger towns. It may be so in other dioceses, but with that we have nothing to do. It must be quite evident to an observer that the Church has not either in numbers or influence the comparative weight in the community which she possessed fifty years ago. If any one will stand on a Sunday morning or on a Sunday evening at any point where the way divides, which leads to, say a Presbyterian or Methodist place of worship on the one hand, and to the Church on the other hand, in a country town or village, it will not take long to convince him of this truth. If any one will go through the names of the doctors and lawyers in most of such places, he will soon learn which religious bodies these business men for the most part belong to. If he is of a literary turn, and considers the membership and officering of societies for mutual improvement in this line, he will very soon see which of "the churches" has the most influence in these matters. Should he have the opportunity of looking over the lists of teachers in high or public schools, he will quickly find out where the Church comes in the teaching profession, and in how few places the Church has, not to say a majority, but even a reasonably fair show on boards of trustees. I have been a member of a board of ten for between three and four years. For three years I was the only member of the Church on that board, and now I am one of two Churchmen on the board. Of course two out of ten, even if they were agreed, could have no real influence in the appointment of a teacher. So it comes to pass that in the place in which I live, out of eighteen or twenty teachers of all sorts, only one, so far as I know, a female teacher in a public school, belongs to the Church. You can easily understand, therefore, which way the children and young people are influenced, and for all practical purposes all our schools are Separate, denominational schools, the ownership of them being amicably shared by the Methodists and Presbyterians, with the Anabaptists to help them in any special effort against the Church. The Church is decidedly a minority in Ontario, and not only weaker numerically, but weak even out of proportion to its numbers. In 1843, taking the Church, the Methodists, the Presbyterians, and the Roman Catholics of Ontario, the Church population was thirty and one half per cent. of the four bodies. Taking the same bodies in 1891, the Church is not quite 21 per cent. of them, having lost relatively to these other bodies about ten per cent. in forty-eight years. I might go into a great many more figures, all, I fear, tending in the same direction, but I want to be as brief as possible. It would be well to enquire whether the country parishes have maintained as they might, and as these other religious bodies do, their local parochial control of Church matters, and have taken care to let their voices be heard, and their influence felt, in the diocesan councils. Churchmen might ask whether, instead of coming up themselves to the Synod to hear and speak for the good of the Church, they have not allowed themselves to be mere puppets made to dance according to orders by parties and cliques in Toronto. They might consider whether it would not be more for the dignity and benefit of the Church that each parish should be honestly and truly represented by at least one good and true man of its own, who knows the views and wishes of its fellow-parishioners, and is above being made the tool of party wire-pullers. And lastly, whether the city of Toronto, having a right from its thirty odd parishes to send about a hundred laymen to the Synod, is not sufficiently represented there, without virtually securing to itself the preponderating influence of an additional number of men chosen, according to order, by country parishes out of laymen living in Toronto, and who as a general thing can know or care comparatively little about the parishes they are supposed to represent. On all the committees and delegations of the Synod from sixty-four to eighty-two per cent., in some cases all, are appointed from Toronto. Once break this chain of slavery, and you will see our Church freed from the curse of centralization, alive and interested, and vigorous in the most remote parishes of the diocese.

A CHURCHMAN.

—He who never connects God with his daily life knows nothing of the spiritual meanings and uses of life—nothing of the calm, strong patience with which ills may be endured; of the gentle, tender comfort which the Father's love can minister, of the blessed rest to be realized in His forgiving love, His tender Fatherhood; of the deep, peaceful sense of the Infinite One ever near, a refuge and a strength.

Family Reading.

My Trust.

A picture memory brings to me,
I look across the years and see
Myself beside my mother's knee.

I feel her gentle hand restrain
My selfish moods, and know again
A child's blind sense of wrong and pain.

But wiser now, a man grey grown,
My childhood's needs are better known,
My mother's chastening love I own.

Grey grown, but in our Father's sight
A child still groping for the light
To read His works and ways aright.

I wait, in His good time to see
That, as my mother dealt with me,
So with His children dealth He.

I bow myself beneath His hand;
That pain itself was wisely planned
I feel, and partly understand.

The joy that comes in sorrow's guise,
The sweet pains of self-sacrifice,
I would not have them otherwise.

I suffer with no vain pretense
Of triumph over flesh and sense,
Yet trust the grievous providence.

How dark so'er it seems, may tend,
By ways I cannot comprehend,
To some unguessed benignant end;

That every loss and lapse may gain
The clear aired heights by steps of pain,
And never cross is borne in vain.

—J. G. Whittier.

Self-Appreciation.

It is exceedingly important, and exceedingly difficult, to every man to make a right estimate of himself. If the only thing we had to do was to humble ourselves, the difficulty would not be so great; at least it would be a difficulty of a different kind. The cause of this difficulty is two-fold. One, because, as an object may be too near the eye for vision to act upon it distinctly, so a man's mind is too near a man's mind for a man's mind to see it clearly. And the other because in this court the judge, the witness, and the person examined are all one and the same. Hence the confusion; and out of the confusion an uncertainty about the result; and because we find an uncertainty about the result, an unwillingness to undertake the work at all. It is not, then, to be wondered at that there should be a tendency in man to run into great extremes; or that the same man should, at different times in his life, be very inconsistent in himself in this matter of self-appreciation. There can be no doubt that by far the most frequent, and it is the most dangerous, error is an over-estimate. One man lives so much with himself and in himself; another is so fond of comparing himself with certain persons whom he likes to select for that purpose; another is so apt to compare himself with what he used to be at another time; one man is always seeing himself so entirely as a certain little loving circle, which lives about him, sees him; another takes himself at the measure, not of what he is, but of what he is always hoping and intending to be; another has altogether such low and unworthy standards of what a man may be, and what a man ought to be; another is always so fixing his eyes on his good parts and intentionally turning away from his bad ones till that class is exceedingly large, of which the Apostle speaks, who "think of themselves more highly than they ought to think." (Romans iii. 8.) On the other hand, there are not a few who dangerously, and even sinfully, depreciate themselves. Many, no doubt, do this simply in affectation. They think proudly, while they speak humbly about their own state. Those are mere hypocrites! But besides these, it is quite plain that there are others who do really think of themselves loweringly, in a way and to a degree that, in the first place, is not true; secondly, it brings with it much depression and distress in their own feelings; thirdly, it often in-

capacitates them for work, and for the very work which God sets them to do; and fourthly, it thus darkens the grace of God in them, and His purposes are frustrated. St. Paul warns every man "not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think;" there is the caution against the prevalent sin of human nature. And now, notice, he goes on, "but to think"—now observe he does not say lowly, he does not say humbly, as we probably should have expected him to say, or as we probably should have written it, but he says accurately, justly in a proportion, "think soberly according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."—J. Vaughan.

Christian Courage.

In your relation with your fellow creatures, in your intercourse with the world, it requires much courage and resolution to be sturdily upright and just. It marks the truly bold man to do that which is right at all hazards. There is often a narrow, little, selfish policy in worldly minds that will not hesitate, even for a paltry consideration, to lose sight of all attention to the rights and feelings of others. Such persons, at length, follow this interested bias so far as to ask first, upon every occasion, not "On which side does justice lie?" but "On which side shall I gain the greater advantage?" But this betrays a long practice of selfishness, if not a thorough and habitual want of principle. Worldly persons, indeed, have adopted an uncharitable general maxim, that every man may be tempted to act unjustly; or, to use their own phrase, that "every man has his price"; that there is no one who, for some consideration or other, would not commit almost any action. Now here is where the courage that we are speaking of is required. Courage is requisite even in doing good. Our good actions may cost us much trouble and even expense, much opposition, much vexation, and much misrepresentation, for our good may not only be evil spoken of, but it may be to ourselves a positive evil in a worldly and temporal point of view. On some occasions we may have to encounter the resistance of the indolent and the selfish, the thwarting malignity of envy that will never either co-operate or commend; the sneers of the niggardly, who revenge an extorted charity by slandering the man that shamed them to it; and the unkind constructions of the worldly, who never attribute disinterested motives to a prominence in well-doing. In all these cases we want also a bold and patient decision of character. Again, it requires courage to forgive injuries and endure wrongs, as well as, on the other hand, to ask for forgiveness and to make reparation. Yet the Christian must do both when necessary. He must be deaf to the vindictive cries of wounded pride; he must reject the suggestions of a too sensitive vanity; he must look to his own amount of faults and imperfections, and actual offences, and then forgive and forget to the utmost of his power, as he hopes himself to have his own transgressions cancelled at the day of judgment.

Love Suffereth Long.

"Love suffereth long." It is perhaps remarkable that this feature should be presented to us first of all, as if suffering, enduring some trial, were a matter of course. It reads us a lesson as to the kind of world in which we Christians have to live. The true Christian knows, and will know, no limit to his endurance. It is not his good fortune that he can put up with this or that much of provocation, but it is his principle to do it. He practices and prays over it, and he goes and does it. Some of the noblest victories which the Church has seen of habitual forbearance and un-failing long suffering have been hard victories, gained over a rebellious and unkindly disposition; battles for right and won by men with whom they were indeed battles, with whom not only their own propensities, but friends around them, and the world in which they were dwelling, placed barriers almost insuperable against their exercise of this first of Christian graces. One Christian who thus reflects his Master's image calm and unbroken will win more souls to Christ than ten of those who hate the sinner by discountenancing the sin.—H. Alford.