

Let us speak not in a spirit of defiance, but in a spirit of love, let us eschew all needless expressions which may give offence; above all let us remember that the grand object which we have in view is the discovery of the wisest methods of work, the strengthening of peace, the firmer cohesion of the members of the Body. By this course our very differences will serve to bring out more clearly the unity of our faith, and our diversities of thought will be at once a safeguard and protest against any narrowing of the limits which define the membership of our branch of the Catholic Church.—
BISHOP MACLAGAN.

CHURCH THOUGHTS BY A LAYMAN.

No. 56.—THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LAITY.

IT is a matter of regret that the question raised at the Provincial Synod touching the discipline of the laity was not debated upon its merits rather than shelved as it was on a technicality. It detracts from the dignity of such an assembly to have partial debates upon propositions which are at length discovered to be outside its jurisdiction. A representative body, meeting only every third year, comprising all the bishops, the titular clergy, and others from all the dioceses, who are selected from and elected by the Diocesan Synods, with a large element of distinguished laymen, or laymen who are distinguished, if by naught else, as in some cases, by being made delegates to this Synod—such an important body ought to protect itself from being placed in the false position of devoting time to matters beyond its lawful powers to legislate upon. A committee should meet before the Synod and cancel all notices of motion which are only certain to be ultimately ruled out after fruitless debate.

The Discipline of the Laity is a subject not only especially appropriate for discussion and passing upon by a Provincial Synod, but positively beyond the powers of a Diocesan Synod to deal with in a worthy spirit. The delicacy of the topic, the possibilities of mischief being caused by its being dealt with in a narrow, local, or worse still, a party spirit, call for its treatment with that statesmanlike breadth which can only be obtained by a general assembly, such as the Provincial Synod, comprising the matured wisdom, experience and spiritual gifts of the whole Episcopate and the more mature clergy, aided by the more highly cultured members of the laity.

It is a very striking remark of the late Bishop Wilberforce that a Church without discipline for its lay members is in a perilous position. Practically, the Church of England has thrown this safeguard away, infinite reproach has followed, and schism has found in this looseness its only tolerable plea. Those who have cast this reproach at the Church have, however, not escaped the same evils. The laxity of the Church has been of public cognizance, and her trust has been regarded as having created a code of honor more binding than a written law, hence her scandalous members have ever received severe condemnation from the world. The severe disciplinary, much boasted of code of the sects, has created a wholly opposite feeling. This code, in many sects, has been carried so high in its demands, and is so stern in its repressions, as to be Jewish in oppressiveness upon the individual conscience. The violation done by the hardness, the pettiness, the anti-social regulations of the sects to some of the finest, noblest, purest instincts of humanity, and their interdict upon some of the sweetest of human joys, has been to these high flying bodies far more injurious than the lack of all discipline has been to the Church. The world at large has seen the sect-member fenced in by his

code of discipline in certain walks of social life, and pronounced him a very Pharisee, indeed, wearing the phylactery of his sect upon his forehead. The world, too, has judged him also as, presumably, a thorough hypocrite, for, outside the fence, those who make the most exalted claims to spirituality are found to be just as keen at a bargain, just as selfish, just as hard to deal with, in a word, just as worldly as the veriest worldling. The Churchman has had an immense advantage over these persons, and it is a matter of universal remark, as it is of daily experience, that while we Churchmen are not fenced in by a disciplinary code which proclaims us not as other men are, we maintain a far higher tone, and commend our high calling more to the world's respect in our freedom than others do in their pharisaic exclusiveness. Our code of honor has had nobler results than the written law of the sects. But none the less is it desirable to formulate some order of discipline, touching, however, not the social life and habits, such as the amusements of our people, but their Church life and habits. It is a cruel wrong to the Church to give unrestrained liberty to laymen to spend their money and energy in assaulting the doctrines and liturgical offices of the Church or in teaching by the circulation of leaflets, of which the result is sacrilege, or in other open, shameless acts of rebellion against authority, even though that authority is not formulated or protected by a law. It is, too, a dangerous thing to admit to the full rights and privileges of Church membership men who came over to the Church from other bodies, not because their convictions lead them to us, but because some quarrel with a pastor or fellow-member, or irregularity of life which is bringing them under discipline, has made the society with which they have been connected no longer agreeable. Whether the Church should receive such a class of proselytes at Holy Communion on easier terms than her own children, whether, indeed, they ought to be accepted without confirmation, seem to us questions which admit of only one answer. But many feel disposed to place no barrier in the way of any pious soul seeking Christ at his own sacred table. However strongly that feeling may over-ride the claims of Church order, all must admit that before such persons are admitted to any position of influence or power, they ought to be subjected to an examination as to their motives, and give satisfactory reasons for seeking communion with the Catholic Church. If needful, as in all cases it would be found to be, such persons ought to be carefully instructed in the doctrines, services, and history of the Church, into whose fold they have taken shelter, in order to prepare them for exercising their membership privileges with intelligence and fidelity. The Church has adopted the same policy which has made England the refuge of the distressed and the oppressed of all nationalities. Lord Brougham said: "The slave who touches the soil of England is free," so it is with the Church. The poor victim of sectarianism flees to her altars as to a city of refuge, and their shackles fall as there they receive of Him who is life and liberty. But, while the State may thus open its shores to all comers, knowing that it has powers of police to guard its citizens from evil men, the Church has no such disciplinary, protective, internal safe-guard, therefore, so large a measure of freedom is a menace and peril to her peace. What terrible trials have afflicted the Church in Canada; what grievous injuries she is still enduring for want of the discipline of the laity who have come into her from schism, is, alas, only too well known!

We, who can trace our Church ancestry back unbroken until it leads up to some martyr, a victim of Rome's tyranny, have to submit to the unendurable indignity of having our Catholic principles questioned by raw proselytes, who have not learned yet to realize the grandeur of the heritage of freedom, which for generations they and theirs contemptuously spurned, but into which they have now so easily, so recently come. Accustomed to live in the mere prison yard of a sect, eyed on all sides by spying guards, and bound in by stone walls, they come into the broad domain of the Church, and fain would build us up within the stone walls of party, and fain would terrify us by the espionage of party sentinels, lest our Catholic words offend their cramped souls.

Noble, unsuspecting, magnanimous, loving old Church of England—thou hast kept no guard at thy portals, so that wolves have come into thy fold, worrying the flock, who, having no power to eject the intruder, can only cry to the Chief Shepherd: *Quousque, Domine, quousque?* Surely to guard this fold from such danger the Head of the Church looks to His faithful people. Surely, we trust, His faithful people will soon so guard the fold, even though those who desire to break down the fences thereof take counsel together against the Lord and against the Church of his Anointed.

THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT IN FRANCE.

BY THE REV. E. RANSFORD, LL.B.

TO deal with the last two objections which appeared in our last article. First—It is "not called for," because (says one party) there already exists a French Protestant Church which can supply all that is required. But this so-called Church has no succession, does not lay claim to that succession from Christ and His Apostles, without which there can be neither Church nor sacraments. This a well-read, intelligent Frenchman, to say nothing of a devout Churchman, knows to be incompatible with what he most desiderates. Besides, as has been already pointed out, Dr. Pigou, of Halifax, Yorkshire, an Evangelical of the the Evangelicals, admits that this French Protestantism has been tried and found wanting. Wherefore, something else is called for. It is "not called for," say other, because there already exists in France a proper, organized branch of the Church Catholic, with a legitimate succession and valid Sacraments. Why not reform that? To put outside the declaration of that branch as to needing no reform and being irreformable, we must judge of it by its fruits. What these fruits are the state of France shows to-day, and proves conclusively either that this alleged branch has been cut off from the parent stem, or that it has somehow or other harked back to the original badness of the "wild olive tree" from which it was cut out. In each case a new system was called for.

It is "unorthodox," clamours another set of men. But "unorthodox" means contrary to "orthodoxy," which itself stands for such truth in dogma as binds to salvation and produces the fruits of the Spirit. As yet there has not been time to judge of the fruits of the new movement; all that can be asserted as to its dogmas is that they are those of the Church Catholic. This fact, therefore, is in favour of the work being of God, and not one to be overthrown by men. It is "unorthodox," cries another party, because its dogmas are not those of Calvinism, and those of French or Genevan Pro-