

Oct. 7, 1897.]

CANADIAN CHURCHMAN.

611

Family Reading.

HYMN OF THE HARVEST.

Now to Thee, gracious Lord of the season, be hon-
our and glory and praise,
That again in the joy of the harvest our jubilant
anthem we raise.

Though many the fears that beset us, though faith
waxes feeble and cold,
Thy bow, with its promise unbroken, glitters still
as it glittered of old.

Though weary we grow in our watching the weeks
of the drought as they pass,
When the earth is as iron beneath us, and the
heaven above us as brass—

Yet the showers come back in their season; once
more in the land there is seen
The brook brimming over with crystals, the grass
as the emerald green.

Though troubled the spirit within us, when the
mist upon valley and plain
Lies thick, and the clouds in their armies return
again after the rain—

Yet the sun cometh forth as a giant, and after the
tempest the morn
Is cloudless and fair, and the colour grows golden
and rich on the corn.

For seed time and harvest we thank Thee; our
fears as the shadows have fled;
Thou hast given his seed to the sower, Thou hast
given the eater his bread.

—Alfred Church.

SEVEN REASONS WHY I AM A CHURCHMAN.

First. Because I learn from studying the Holy Scriptures that Christianity is something more than the acceptance of certain doctrines, it also involves faithful membership in a Divine Society, which society is the mystical Body of Christ.

Secondly. By the study of ecclesiastical history, I find that this Divine society of the Lord's own founding has lived on through the century, spread throughout the world, and grown to immense proportions. The general title by which it is everywhere known is the Holy Catholic Church, while that portion of it which has jurisdiction in the United States is called the American or Episcopal Church, as in Great Britain it is known as the Church of England, or as in the New Testament it was the Church in Ephesus, or the Church in Smyrna.

Thirdly. From the study of both the Bible and Church history I further find that Christ gave authority to the ministers of Apostolic succession to preach the Gospel, absolve sinners and feed the flock, and that "whoso heareth them heareth Christ, but whoso despiseth them despiseth Christ." Since alone in the Catholic Church the Apostolic ministry still exists, I am bound, in loyalty to the priesthood of Christ's own appointment, to be an Episcopalian.

Fourthly. Amid all the variety of religious creeds and beliefs held by the various denominations I find the faith once delivered to the saints and the doctrines of the Apostles in their entirety, whole and undefiled, taught and practised only in the Catholic Church. Therefore, for the sake of sound doctrine and Bible truth, I am a Churchman.

Fifthly. In contrast to the wild extravagances and diverse forms of worship in vogue among sectarian bodies, I am charmed with the beauty and reverent dignity of the Episcopal service, and once again for the sake of the Book of Common Prayer I am a Churchman.

Sixthly. The rich store of Divine grace wherewith God hath enriched the Holy Catholic Church and the beautiful sacramental system by which these heavenly riches are dispensed so freely to poverty-stricken sinners, makes me rejoice in her bounty, and for the sake of what my spiritual mother has done for me, I am a Churchman.

Lastly. I am a Churchman because the Church, like my Saviour, is Catholic; all loving, all embracing, wide as the universe, long as eternity, deep as the sea, and as high as heaven.

A SHINING LIGHT.

A lamp in a cottage window will be seen a mile away, and look actually brighter in the distance than it does near. So a right thing, faithfully done, will shine bright in the far distance, too.

It is a little trouble to get up and get ready in time for church on a Sunday morning. You are not obliged to be up at a certain time on Sundays, as you are on week days, and so it is very tempting to stay in bed. But suppose you make yourself do it (remembering it isn't your day, but God's); now do you suppose that effort won't have any effect on those around you?

I know it will. The light must shine. Your caring about the Church and Holy Communion makes the person who lives opposite, not quite comfortable in his mind, as he loiters away the morning in an easy-going fashion. He doesn't say anything, and you don't say anything, but that makes no difference. Your light shines in the corners as well as quite near, and you possibly couldn't help that if you tried!

And in church, too. One devout worshipper helps to make twenty more.

Haven't you felt yourself, that the fact of seeing a man near you reverently following the Psalms as they are sung or read, with a look on his face that seems to say God is really speaking to him in those words, and he to God, hasn't that made you—first, a little bit ashamed of yourself; secondly, anxious to do like him? To get into the real spirit of the service too?

Now, what is that but his light shining? He doesn't know that he is lighting you, but he can't help doing it. He can't keep his light to himself, it must shine on those about him and near him.

MAN'S DIVINE AFFINITIES.

How was it possible to make men feel that they are something quite different from brute beasts, that they were not animals, clever and more cunning than all other animals, that might is not right, self-control not a folly? Or how is it possible to prove that man is not a mere perishing animal that dies, and then there is an end of him? The world of Greece and Rome had come to the blank conclusion that there was no hope, no life worth living. There are plenty of people living now who have inherited instincts from centuries of Christian forefathers, and who are still influenced by Christian customs and traditions, and thus go on as they have been used to do, but who live in blank hopelessness as to the future. Now is it possible to prove to them that in every soul of man is the imperishableness of the Divine? Philosophy cannot do it—it is simply silent. Science cannot do it—it is outside her province. Read the philosophies of the would-be philosophers, and you will despair, as centuries ago men despaired. They do not touch the greater hope. And so there sets in the struggle of the day between all the now long-inherited Christian instincts of the race, all the unsuppressed divinely-given instincts of the man, against the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

In this struggle we need a reinforcement of

power. It is to be found in a risen Saviour. Christ died that there might be no part of our experience peculiar to ourselves, that He might show that He was very man. He rose to show that death was not the end of all things; and He went into heaven that He might show by His visible rising what will in some form happen also to us. And all for this reason, and to teach us for ever that the interval is bridged over completely from man to God. This vast interval He traversed twice; He came down from God to man, He went up from man to God. He was Himself and is Himself, God and man. The chain is complete from heaven to earth. Since Christ came man knows that he is not a mere animal—he is by his affinities Divine. He walks the earth a new creature. See, says the history of Jesus Christ, the chain is already complete that connects man with God. If the chain reaches down till its lower end is lost in molecular forces, it reaches up till its upper end is lost in the glory of the throne of God, and in the Divine person of Jesus Christ, who has shown us the perfection of God.

THE CHRISTIAN'S DUTY.

It is not enough to say, "Let us live the devoted, self-denying life, which befits the humble followers of Christ, and leave aside all that distresses or distracts." We have a higher duty than this. The nobler our idea of the Divine nature, the higher we rate our Christian privileges; the better our lives, the more we shall desire to testify of those things before the world of unbelief. If to our souls the revelation of Jesus Christ provides solutions for admitted ills; if it can comfort our aching hearts in sorrow, and stir us to noble acts in danger; if it weds the ideal to the commonplace, and draws man ever from himself, then, surely, we need not be afraid to be left face to face with either the materialist or the sceptic. There is in the Gospel a spiritual power which bears the pilgrims safely through the water-floods: we may tremble and be perplexed, yet we will not fail nor fall. "If God be with me, I will not fear what man can do unto me." —G. W. Kitchin.

CHRISTIAN TEMPERANCE.

To be temperate, in the primary sense of the word, is to be under command, self-governed, to feel the reins of our desires, and to be able to check them. It is obvious that this of itself implies a certain amount of prudence to know when, at what point, to exercise this control. There is such a thing as negative as well as positive intemperance. God made His world for our use. He gave us our faculties to be employed. If we use not the one, and employ not the other, then, though we do not usually call such an insensibility by the name of intemperance, it certainly is a breach of temperance, the very essence of which is to use God's bounties in moderation, to employ our faculties and desires, but so as to retain the guidance and check over them. A Christian man must be temperate in his religion. It is not a passion, carrying him out of his place in life and its appointed duties; nor a fancy, leading him to all kinds of wild notions, requiring constant novelty to feed it and keep it from wearing him; nor, again, is it a charm to be sedulously gone through as a balm to his conscience. It is a matter demanding the best use of his best faculties. Temperance must also be shown in the intellectual life, in opinions and in language. The end of all is our sanctification by God's Spirit to God's glory: the perfection, not of stoical morality, but of Christian holiness.

—He that will believe only what he can fully comprehend must either have a very long head or a very short creed.