

CONTEMPORARY CHURCH OPINION.

Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette.

The question of Greek or no Greek has been decided at Cambridge in favor of the language in which Homer sang and St. Paul wrote his Epistles, and St. Luke his Gospel and history of the Apostolic Church—the language of the Primitive Fathers and of the Ecumenical Councils. We cannot help thinking it would have been a had day for our theology if the Anti-Greek faction had prevailed. We should before long have found the clergy as little required to be at home in one of the sacred languages of Holy Scripture as they are at present in the other. One victory would have been followed up by another, and after a while the clergy would have been found as ignorant of Greek as very many of them are at present of Hebrew. The chances are that the contagion would have spread after a while to Oxford, where the specialists are also active enough. We know that in Dublin some ripples of the same wave have already been felt. Students of Science and Mathematics in Cambridge will still be required to know something of Greek for their Previous Examination.

Family Churchman, (London, England).

Every now and again events occur which show that what may be called the Hudibrastic type of Churchman is still (shall we say rampant?) in our midst—

Such as do
Call fire, and sword, and desolation
A godly, thorough reformation.

It would be well if these iconoclastic personages would recollect that there is a martyrdom of inanimate objects as well as of animated beings; and that, in one case as well as in the other, the destruction of the martyr is the seed of the Church. What is more illustrative of the genius of destructive Puritanism than the havoc made in many of our old cathedrals by those who, no doubt, thought they were doing God's service by breaking down the carved work with axes and hammers? There is always a strong recoil in favor of the object thus desecrated; and such we may be sure will be the result in the case of spoliation at Maralin, near Lurgan. Supposing there was anything really to be objected to in the reredos, the rector was open to conviction. He was ready to leave matters in the Bishop's hands. Could he do more? Yes, he could pull it down there and then; and that was what he was forced to do *vi et armis*. It was dismantled in the dead of night—the proper time for such burglarious work, to call it by its very mildest name. Say rather it was an act of wanton, deliberate sacrilege, which will scarcely, we should think, go unnoticed. But even if it does, it will tell strongly in favor of the system against which it was levelled. Brute force never pays in the long run. That reredos lying on the ground was ten times more significant than it would have been in its proper place. It is not too much to say that the St. Paul's reredos will interest and tell its story to thousands who would never have been brought within range of its influence, had not such strenuous efforts been made to nullify that influence.

The Living Church.

There are two methods in the matter of church attendance. One is the right way. The other

is the wrong way. One is the Christian way. The other is the worldly way. One is the way of the comparatively few. The Christian way is for a man to make church attendance a matter of rule, of principle, of duty; if possible of privilege also, great and blessed privilege; but in any event, a matter of duty and of principle. The rule is to be at church whenever we can unless we know that it is our duty to stay away. And we should stay away only when not able to go, or when seemingly we can do more good by not being at church than by being there. That, however, will be decidedly the exception, not the rule; and as to that, every Christian should be guided by an enlightened conscience, remembering that, "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His." This is the right way, the Christian rule, as to church attendance. The other way is the wrong, the worldly way. In effect it is: do as you please; go to church when you like; stay away when you like; do not act from principle or a sense of duty: make it a mere matter of whim, fancy, inclination, caprice; never consider the effect of your example or what would be for the greater glory of God. Should "neighbors drop in about church time," sit and gossip with them. It is a very effective way of showing them how little you care for that which Scripture enjoins and the Church prescribes. The Apostle says: "Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love, and to good works; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is." Yes, "as the manner of some is," and not of some only, but of a great many. Now these words of St. Paul, and many like words, are the words of Holy Scripture. And these are those of the Church: "All persons within this Church shall celebrate and keep the Lord's Day, commonly called Sunday, in hearing the Word of God read and taught, in private and public prayer, in other exercises of devotion, and in acts of charity, using all godly and sober conversation." This is what the Church says, and it is our duty to "hear the Church." Touching a matter of no more importance, the Lord's explicit direction as to the man who will not "hear the Church" was: "If he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."

PERSONAL RELIGION.

By CANON BURROWS.

First, let it be agreed, as a basis of thought, that in no other way can a clergyman so much benefit his parish as by his own growth in grace. We may know of many eloquent men who may preach, Sunday after Sunday, as good sermons as can be heard in England; we may know of men thoroughly clever, so that you cannot talk with them without feeling you are in contact with a mind of first-rate power. You may think of very industrious men, who are always at work in their parishes, teaching in schools the best hours of the day, unremitting in attention to the sick, perserving in knocking at the doors of those who are not sick, making acquaintance with every one, labouring in night schools, never going to bed but with the consciousness that they have earned repose by doing a good day's work; still, good as all this is, a man whose characteristic is holiness is a greater blessing to a parish, he effects more, he will be more influential, will be longer remembered, will leave more lasting traces of his influence.

Holiness is the result when a man has given himself very earnestly to God, has concentrated his attention, has withdrawn himself, and relinquished his interest in much that occupies others; has gained, as we may say, an intimacy with the unseen Saviour; has a delight in prayer; is in the habit of bringing his dead self in contact with the life-giving Saviour, as the dead child was brought into contact with the living prophet. Influence has streamed out from the Saviour and is moulding the man. You see that he advancing in holiness by the disappearance of faults. He was indolent, but he is now strenuous. You find him so master of his work, so conversant with all matters in his parish, felt in so many directions, that you can scarcely believe that the man's natural tendency and besetting infirmity was indolence. You find him very guarded in his conversation, never repeating what is to the disadvantage of others. You find him reverent, humble, modest, docile, not censuring those in high places, not criticising Bishops and Governors of the Church, however much he may lament their action, or be of a diderent theological school. You feel that, though he is intelligent and sympathetic, and does not refuse to be interested in other subjects, yet that he brightens and warms when the things of God are on the tapis, and you can understand one saying of him, "Behold now, I perceive that this is an holy man of God."

Surely, dear brethren, if we could become such, we should be doing more for our parishioners than we shall ever do by restoring their church, improving their choir, or building a school. Not, of course, but that these are good and glorious works, but the Saviour of holiness it better and still more glorious.

It is to be feared that many go on without proposing to themselves growth in holiness as a distinct object; if they theorise at all, they seem to suppose that it will come to itself, or that it is found more by nature spontaneously than as result of effort and cultivation; but we have not because we ask not. It is an old criticism on the English Church that we have few saints. We have a gentlemanly clergy, a tolerably learned clergy (if we mean by that a knowledge of Greek plays, Horace and Virgil); we have men who can mix in society with ease and propriety; but we have few eminently holy persons, and those we have are often of very defective schools of theology.

Probably there is nothing more important than the first year of a man's ministerial life. If he gets into desultory habits then, it is too likely that he will be desultory all the rest of his life; if, on the contrary, he maps out his day well, makes the most of his time, rises early, gets a certain amount of his hard reading or thinking every day; if his sermons are real, not conventional, not repetitions of other person's ideas (except those sermons which are mainly expository), but original attempts of his own to hit off characters, enforce virtues, teach doctrines; if he has watched sick cases with the same kind of intelligent interest that a young medical student watches cases in a hospital that are for the first time entrusted to him by his teachers; if, feeling the importance of all beginnings, he has endeavored not to be hurried, overdone, but to do a little well, and, because of his inexperience, to lay all difficult cases before God in prayer, to wrestle with God for a blessing on all he takes in hand: then there is good hope that his ministry will be fruitful one, not cursed with barrenness, but rich in usefulness to others, and blessings to his own soul. Notice, too, what a peculiar advantage we have in the Church system that, at the end of one year or so, the young clergyman is recalled, is led to review the past, and, at a second ordination, to consider how far he has carried out the intentions with which he started. Is he going on so as to become that which is so evidently needed. "an holy man of God?"—*Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette.*