

REVIEWS.

The Message and the Messengers. Lessons from the History of Preaching. By the Rev. Fleming James, D.D., Jay Cooke, Professor of Homiletics and Pastoral Care in the Divinity School of the Protestant Episcopal Church, Philadelphia. 12mo., pp. 244. \$1.25. New York: Thomas Whittaker. Toronto: Rowsell and Hutchison.

The question of preaching is often discussed, and it is accepted almost as a commonplace that the pulpit of the present day is losing its power. But how this is, and why it should be, there is slight attempt made to decide. If it be true, it is a serious prospect for the Church of God. Preaching, as an authoritative declaration of God's Truth, and as a living call to righteousness, is probably the most important duty that rests upon the Christian Church; it has its conditions, both of strength and of weakness, and we cannot undervalue its power with impunity. The pulpit is found to lose its power and regain it with the ebb and flow of the spiritual life on certain ascertainable principles, but it is difficult to say on every occasion which is the cause and which the consequence. Dr. James, however, does the subject a good service by studying the laws of effective preaching through different periods, and by different agents. From the preaching done by the Jewish, and specially by our Lord, he deduces from essential principles that must inhere in all true preaching, at their highest in its best, and at their lowest in its worst. "(1) Preaching must be the word of God; (2) it must be delivered as a message from God, who is face to face with His people; (3) its whole purpose must be godly living; (4) it must adapt itself to the culture, sentiments, sympathies, and situation of the people." (p. 14). With the utmost fidelity our author has followed the working of these principles in the various ages of the Church, down to the present day. The study is most careful and helpful, and never more needful than now. We heartily recommend it to the consideration of all that call themselves Christians.

OUR LETTER FROM ENGLAND.

(From Our Own Correspondent.)

To one like myself, who has spent the greater portion of his life in Britain, it is intensely interesting to see the trend of public opinion in the direction of Church Reform. This reform is now in very deed in the air. It has to come, however, a little nearer to the average Churchman to be of any practical use. It has to be precipitated in some solid, tangible shape, and this is gradually taking place. That the laity are to have a real, legalized position in a proper Church assembly, is accepted as a fundamental axiom. Two ways are suggested of securing this lay influence. They may be elected to sit with the clergy in a lower house, or they may elect the clergy to represent them. Each course has its warm advocates. But colonial experience points to an equal number of clergy sitting together as being the better plan of the two. Then it seems to be assumed that the Bishops must have a separate chamber by themselves. Otherwise the Bishops cannot act, it is alleged, in their corporate capacity. But surely they could vote by orders as they do in your parts of the world. There is much satisfaction felt by keen-headed Churchmen in this frequent discussion of the subject—the only real difficulty in the way being the apathy of the great mass of Churchmen. The Church Instruction League must evidently precede and prepare the way for the Reform League.

Dr. Westcott has just published, through Macmillan, a volume entitled "Christian Aspects of Life." (7s. 6d. net.) There are many readers to whom both the Bishop's style and ideas furnish nutriment and inspiration, and these will not be disappointed with the new volume. In explanation of its appearance, the Bishop says that we re-

quire; I cannot doubt, to modify very largely both our ideals and our practice; to study more carefully than we have ever done the characteristic endowments and history of our nation, and of our Church in relation to other peoples and other faiths; to calculate the moral effects of the popular types and aims of education; to bring the differences of our work and circumstances under the ennobling influences of one supreme fellowship; to cultivate generally the capacity for delight in the common treasures of mankind and nature; to strive habitually to see God in His works, and in His working. All this has been made possible for us by our faith; and the prevailing currents of opinion are favourable to an effective review of our present position. There is a growing tendency to judge conduct by reference to the whole, and to the eternal; to subordinate personal to social interests.

Quite a characteristic passage is the following, taken from the sermon called "Via hominis visio Dei." The vision of God makes life, in the great phrase of Origen, a continuous prayer, and opens our hearts to prophetic cries, which witness to the fulfillment among us of the promise of the latter days, while the Lord pours out His Spirit upon all flesh.

For we live in days of revelation. The Spirit still takes of the things of Christ, and shows them to dedicated souls. We need no new message for the fuller development of religious force among us; but we do need to take to ourselves the old message with simpler faith, with completer trust, with more loving self-surrender. We need to bring it into all the relations of social and national intercourse. We need to take it from the region of intellectual debate into the market-place and the council chamber.

THE MISSION FIELD.

The number of communicants in China has about doubled in the last five years.

The Rev. Hunter Corbett, D.D., of Chefoo, says that China has awakened as never before to a desire to receive instruction from missionaries.

Recently, a chief man in one of the villages of Bengal, after being converted, gave up a lucrative business and instead began to cultivate the soil, because his former trade had necessitated lying to his customers. "He never lies now," is the comment of the neighbours around his village home.

There are some railway stations in England where the waiting-rooms are regularly supplied with missionary literature, and something might be done in this way in our own country. There are few places where missionary magazines have so good a chance of being widely read, for every one knows how tedious is a long delay when waiting for the train.

In a recent Church Missionary Intelligencer, Rev. W. G. Pope, of Tunisia, appeals for prayer in behalf of missionaries in Moslem lands. Not only are Mohammedans probably the most difficult unbelievers to be impressed by the Gospel, but also a determined effort is being made just now by the French authorities to check and break up missionary work among them. All doors of opportunity are being closed, and the evident purpose is to drive away the missionaries.

The paper that is published nearest the North Pole is one edited by a Mr. Moeller, among the Eskimos of Greenland. He set up his office in a place called Godthaab, among a people that did not know how to read. Twice a month he makes a long trip on skates through the country to sell his paper. At first his paper consisted of nothing but pictures. Then he put in an alphabet, then added a few words, and at last came to sentences, until now his journal contains long articles on important topics. And so this little paper of his has taught the Eskimos of that neighbourhood to read, and what great paper of the world can point to a piece of work more useful and enterprising.—The Mission Field.

Although the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, and the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge have had the largest share in promoting that extension of the Episcopate which at this time presents to us so conspicuous an evidence of our Church's part in the spread of Christianity, the Church Missionary Society's share has not been small. Its influence has been exerted, directly or indirectly, in the establishment of at least thirty out of 92 Colonial and Missionary Bishoprics; and it now entirely supports eleven English Bishops abroad, and partly supports four others. And thirty-seven of the good and faithful men who have occupied these distant episcopal spheres have been C.M.S. missionaries.—C.M.S. Publication.

During Dr. Ferguson's recent visit to Dr. Mackay, in the north of Formosa, the two missionaries called on the Japanese Governor, Mr. Nogi, and had a most kindly reception. In the course of conversation Dr. Mackay told the Governor how the rebels had sorely persecuted the North Formosan Christians, because they refused to take up arms against the Japanese; while on the other hand "Japanese petty officials and soldiers had failed to distinguish between friends and foes, and had insulted, abused, and even killed Christians in more than one locality." Before the interpreter had finished translating Dr. Mackay's story, the Governor "sprang to his feet," says the doctor, "grasped my hand tighter and tighter, whilst he told the interpreter to say that he was determined to protect the Christians. Turning to Ferguson, he said, 'And you in the South have suffered in the same way. I will protect your Christians also.'"

Bishop Stirling, in a letter to one of the Brazil missionaries, after his recent visitation, says: "I must speak reverently and humbly respecting the work itself. These are early days. It is difficult to forecast the future, but I have come from among you, and from looking inquisitively at your Christian efforts and methods, with a hope and conviction that you are doing the work of God in faith and love, guided by the Divine Spirit and bearing marks of the Divine blessing. I have borne away with me a high and affectionate regard for you and your fellow-labourers."

Miss Katharine Tristram, daughter of the well-known Canon Tristram, of Durham, England, is the author of a series of papers in the "Sunday at Home," entitled "Sunrise in Japan." In her second paper she says: "But to our American brethren belongs the honour not only of being first in the field, but of being far more fully represented, and having a considerably larger number of adherents. Many are the different bodies of them at work, and many the shades of belief, but there is indeed room enough for all to labour without a thought of clashing."

The Rev. J. Lindsay Patton writes in "The Church in Japan": "Just as we must forget the foreign bow and practice the Japanese 'o jiggi,' so also in some other matters we must be equally ready to give up what at home is the proper thing. Many things that, on account of the sanction of long standing, seem natural to us, are the reverse in Japanese eyes, and vice versa. This fact makes one of the peculiar difficulties of the foreign missionary. St. Paul saw this, and suggested as the remedy that to the Jew one must become a Jew, to the Greek, a Greek; and not only so, but one must become 'all things to all men' that one might, by all means save some."

An interesting but sad instance of the difficulty of combating superstition has lately come to our notice. The heathen family of one of the Christian teachers of the College lives in an adjoining village. The sister of the young man has been suffering from hysteria. All that we could do was willingly done, and constant medical assistance was given. As is usual in cases of this sort, temporary relief was the result of each visit of the doctor, but in his absence the fits would constantly recur. At first the family were grateful, but after a time the latent force of superstition began to assert itself, and the