

the intellect, the education, and, let me add, the piety to be far more successful in this matter than they are. It is not what I hope and believe it ere long will be—for I observe many indications on the part of my brethren of a resolution to do better, and I know that the abundant blessing of Almighty God will rest upon any sustained efforts to lift the pulpit to its proper level among spiritual agencies.

## HINDRANCES TO PREACHING.

The ecclesiastical proclivities of the age have properly dislodged preaching from its position of pre-eminence above prayer and the sacraments, but, like most reactions in this frail world of ours, they seem to have carried people too far, and persuaded them that there is no particular obligation to listen to sermons. Next, let me name the prodigious development of the public press, gorging and drenching the intellectual appetite during the week, and leaving but scant power of digestion for what falls from the preacher on the Sunday. Akin to this may be mentioned that feverish love of excitement which finds gratification in all sorts of public and private entertainments, but which fails to meet with sufficient novelty and sensationalism in the utterances of God's ambassadors. But above and beyond these things, and I am disposed to think more powerful than them all, are the jests and gibes with which it seems to be the modern fashion to pelt sermons.

## ENEMIES WITHIN.

Preaching is an ordinance of God. The ambassador may discharge his office badly, but reverence for the King from whom he comes should protect him from carping criticism or unseemly indifference. Besides, it is a terrible mistake to imagine that an ordinary preacher in an ordinary church may not do us good, if only we will submit to have good done to us. Somewhat we may generally learn for the first time; still more we may have brought to our remembrance. It is just our detestable pride and our intolerable self-sufficiency that fights off the benefit. You and I should be much better than we are, if we had always listened to sermons. We should be much more capable of grappling with the trials and temptations of daily life, if we had always listened to sermons. We have been our own enemies, so far as we have belonged to the crowd of listless or supercilious hearers.

## METHODS.

The modern sermon must, if possible, be delivered without manuscript. In the sense of being produced on the spur of the moment, very few sermons are, and none ought to be extemporaneous. But preaching without manuscript does not necessarily imply a lack of preparation. It has formed a very material element in the past success of dissent, even as, long before dissent existed, it secured the popularity of the peripatetic friars. Aye, and I don't suppose that St. Peter or St. Paul, or One greater than either, preached from manuscript. It is true that some clergy read off their sermons so remarkably well that we cannot wish them to alter their practice. If we can resemble a Melvill or a Liddon, or even come near them, by no means let us discard our sermon-books. But, speaking generally, it can scarcely be questioned that the impression of earnestness and reality goes along with spoken discourses rather than with written ones. Now even a poor sermon that carries along with it the impression of earnestness and reality has a far greater effect upon mixed congregations than a better one that fails to do so.

The modern sermon must not run too much after what are called the difficulties of the day. The difficulties of the day must be met, but not, as a general rule, before audiences nineteen-twentieths of whom have never heard of them. I confess to a horror of sermons which are supposed to be 'up to date,' especially when the preacher is young and inexperienced. A number of objections are stated, it may be to Miracles, it may be to Revelation, it may be to the doctrine of the Atonement, which are but feebly and hesitatingly met. The result is disastrous. 'Father,' says the boy, on his way home, 'then is not the Bible true?' 'I can see,' reflects the young man, 'that the only correct tip is to be an agnostic.' 'Hang that fellow!' cries paterfamilias, 'why, he considers himself wiser than Isaiah, and more far-seeing

than the Apostle John!' Surely such a preacher, though he may have gratified his own mistaken sense of superiority by attempting to grapple with what calls itself advanced thought, has not done what he was set to do. Let him rouse the careless, let him encourage the penitent, let him teach the ignorant, let him warn the backslider, and let him leave scepticism, or semi-scepticism, to be dealt with at other times and places, and above all, by those who can grapple with them manfully and successfully.

## DOGMATICS.

The modern sermon must not shrink, because it is modern, from being dogmatic. The inculcation of morality is imperative. The painting of word-pictures is attractive. The wrapping up half truths in cloudy sentences is easy and popular. But these things will neither satisfy the conscience of the preacher, nor make the 'man of God' who sit at His feet 'perfect and thoroughly furnished.' The age may very properly suggest our style, or alter our method of treatment, but the age must not be allowed to dictate our message. Whatsoever God tells us, or whatsoever we believe that He tells us, that must we speak, neither exaggerating aught or diminishing aught, but striving to make our utterances an exact reflection of His will. Dogma is a light which scares the purposeless wanderer, and which latitudinarian bigots (for there are no bigots like them) would utterly extinguish; but it shows us the way to heaven, and it is most dangerous, not to say fatal, to attempt the journey without it.

## THE END OF PREACHING.

And then, not to exceed my time, or to abuse your attention, it follows from the last point that the modern sermon, like the ancient, must, with no faltering voice, proclaim Jesus Christ and Him crucified, to some a stumbling-block and to others foolishness, but to us the power of God and the wisdom of God. From the Incarnation, the Cross, the Resurrection, must still radiate all the doctrine and advice upon which we insist, inasmuch as otherwise they will be weak and invertebrate. I believe that they are as capable of meeting the wants and yearnings of the nineteenth century as they were of the first. We shall both save ourselves and them that hear us.

## BROTHERHOOD OF ST. ANDREW IN CANADA.

The Council have fixed the dates for the third annual Convention for Friday, Saturday and Sunday, the 3rd, 4th and 5th of February next, at the city of Kingston.

As there are now over 95 Chapters actually in existence extending over the whole Dominion, the prospects are good for a thoroughly representative and strong Church gathering.

A large committee has been appointed in Kingston, and are already at work. It is hoped that by settling the dates so far in advance, both clergy and laymen will be enabled to make their arrangements so as not to conflict with the Convention.

## A PAPER

READ BY THE REV. WM BEVAN BEFORE THE BISHOP OF NIAGARA AND A CONFERENCE OF THE RURAL DEANERY OF WELLINGTON.

MY LORD AND BRETHREN,—Having been asked to read a paper to you on confirmation, I do so, but with many misgivings, for I feel that the task should have been placed in more competent hands. I sincerely hope you will indulgently overlook the many defects which my paper will doubtless contain. "Laying on of hands" is a symbolic act common to all the dispensations; accompanied by prayer it is so natural and suggestive an act as to have lent itself to many religious uses other than confirmation.

Throughout the Bible, nay more, among all people and through all the ages, "laying on of hands" has always been the outward sign of benediction suggested by natural piety. It was a distinctive feature of the patriarchal dispensation, and always used upon those solemn occasions when the patriarchs gave benediction to their children. During the Mosaic dispensation we again find laying on of hands used for various religious purposes, and so we read of "Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands upon him." When we come to the New Testament and Christian Church, we find laying on of hands used for a variety of purposes; works of healing were accomplished by

this significant gesture; it was the outward sign used in conferring grace for the sacred offices of the Church; it was used by our Lord in giving His solemn benediction to little children—"He laid His hands upon them." But when we speak of confirmation as "the laying on of hands," we use the term in a technical and not in a general sense. In the account of the laying on of hands which we have in the 19th ch. of the Acts of the Apostles, we read that when St. Paul laid his hands upon the twelve men he had just baptized, "the Holy Ghost came on them and they spake with tongues and prophesied." In the 8th ch. of the same book we are simply told that upon the imposition of the hands of the Apostles St. Peter and St. John, the Holy Ghost was given but in the very next verse we read, "when Simon saw that through laying on of the Apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands he may receive the Holy Ghost." These words seem to imply that the presence of the Holy Ghost was manifested by something conspicuous and extraordinary, most probably the speaking with tongues and prophesying mentioned in the 19th ch. This makes it necessary to consider the nature of these extraordinary gifts—or Charismata—of which speaking with tongues and prophesying were two. It will be necessary to bear clearly in mind the fact that the New Testament is composed of books and letters, written at different times; we must clearly grasp the fact that when we are reading the Epistles of St. Paul to the Corinthians and Galatians, they represent an earlier state of the Church quite different to a later state which we have before us in epistles written some years after—Timothy, Titus and the Hebrews, for instance. Bearing this fact in mind, let us see what these "gifts" of the Spirit, extraordinary in their nature, called the Charismata, were. From 1 Cor., 12 ch., we find they were—1st, the word of wisdom; 2nd, the word of knowledge; 3rd, faith; 4th, gifts of healing; 5th, workings of powers or miracles; 6th, prophesy; 7th, discerning of spirits; 8th, speaking with tongues; 9th, interpretation of tongues; 10th, gift of government.

The first of these gifts seems to have been the expression of the hidden, but now revealed, wisdom of God—the 2nd an intellectual grasp of religious doctrine without the aid of the written word—the 3rd seems to have been a faith over and above the ordinary faith that justifies, common to all Christians—the 4th and 5th are clearly extraordinary—the 6th, the power of preaching without the aid of the written word—the 7th, 8th and 9th are clearly extraordinary; the 10th seems to have been the power to regulate the use of all the other gifts—a gift clearly not exercised with much vigour at Corinth, as may be gleaned in the 14th ch. of 1 Cor. One or more of these gifts seem to have been conferred upon every member of the Church when St. Paul wrote his earlier epistles. Allow me to quote one of the most learned divines Europe has produced during this century. Dr. Dollinger writes, "The extraordinary Charismata which the apostles conferred through the imposition of their hands were so diffused and distributed, that nearly every one for a time at least had a share in one or other of these gifts . . . one might say the metal of the Church was still glowing, molten, formless, and presented altogether another aspect than when later it assumed the condition of the cold and hardened casting." Dollinger then goes on to point out that in these early epistles to the Corinthians and the Galatians we have no trace of a local ministry, but that the ministry of extraordinary gifts or Charismata, possessed by nearly every Christian, supplied the place of any established local ministry. Then coming to the later epistles written some years after, he says, "this charismatic state of the Church more and more disappeared, and in the Epistles to the Philippians and the Colossians, there is no longer the slightest intimation of, or reference to the Charismata, although in many passages—had they existed—an allusion seemed called for; on the other hand, in the Epistle to the Philippians, bishops and deacons are saluted as ministers of the local community." In the Pastoral Epistles, written later still, there is no mention of these extraordinary gifts, but a state of the Church is set forth entirely different from the Charismatic; a settled ministry has taken its place and in Dollinger's words, "the prose life of the Church had set in." I may remark in passing how completely the Plymouth Brethren turn the New Testament upside down. Their contention is that the ministry of gifts or Charismata, as set forth in the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, is the permanent and only lawful ministry in the Church, and that the official ministry died out, or should have died out, with the Apostles. The New Testament on the other hand witnesses to the withdrawal of the Charismata ministry, and the establishment of an ordained and official ministry under the direction of the Apostles before the close of the New Testament canon.

But to return to our immediate subject. We are often asked, why do we continue a rite connected with the Charismata, which have ceased to manifest themselves? Can your bishops do what the Apostles