

the soul's growth in holiness has been commensurate with the opportunities and the grace which it offered? Last of all, the world itself, the world not only outside the Church, but the world in the Church; that same world which sneers at Lent, and ignores Advent, has it no need? This forgetfulness of God, this casting off of the faith once loved, this "mining of the flesh" and contempt of things spiritual, now, alas, so prevalent, have these no claim upon loyal Christians, that with greater earnestness, more fervent devotion than ever, they should watch unto prayer?

As we look upon the thoughts, the projects, the controversies of the past year, as we listen to the strife of tongues, the discord which still severs great Churches which should be at one, we must surely welcome the Advent—call to watchfulness, self-denial, intercession. Heeding it, we do well for ourselves, well for the world which needs our prayer. Above all, we give glory to Him who came on Christmas day to bring peace to men of good will.—*The Angelus.*

#### READING.

St. Paul tells Timothy "to give attendance to reading." As the next direction is to exhortation, we may take reading in this place to mean the public reading in the services of the Church. There can be no advice of more importance than this, "give attendance to reading," and no advice can be of higher value to the college and training school than this, "give attendance to reading." When we contrast the effect produced by bad, perfunctory, careless reading on a congregation, with the marked silence, stillness and fixed attention which good reading always commands, we well feel how much the former repels and the latter attracts. Now in reading the lessons and other portions of our noble services, the great secret is to be natural, or as Shakespeare puts it, "that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature." In giving attendance to reading, be natural—natural in the movement of feature and limb, natural in the tones of the voice; also be sympathetic, master and make your own the acts and doings, the characters and persons, that you are presenting to your audience. There are many who in the reading desk and at the lectern, absolutely leave both of these necessary qualifications behind them. There is an unspeakable pleasure—the pleasure of being able to please—a pleasure both to the reader and listener—welling up in the hearts of both, viz., that the reader imparting and the listener receiving information are pleased and gratified both with the information imparted, the language in which it was clothed, and the voice and manner of him presenting it. We fear, indeed are convinced, that for those advanced in years, and whose manner of speaking is fixed and set, a change would be wrong, in fact, impossible; but to the young, starting in his sacred calling, to the student in the University and Training College, we say, "give attendance to reading" is a necessary concomitant of success. Let us note some readers in churches, who from some trait, or habit, we do not like to hear. First, there is the whiner. Who can listen to a whining, doleful reader with pleasure? no one. "Christ our pass-over is sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast." Our glorious Easter anthem comes from the lips of this reader, a perfect jeremiad, whilst the hymn, "O, be joyful in the Lord, all ye lands, serve the Lord with gladness," is read in the tones of Mrs. Gummidge. The whine is not the accent or tone of Christians. Next comes presumption,

or rather bumptiousness, if we may coin such a concrete; this reader, whether he says or sings, gives the listener to understand, and he wishes the listener should know, that he never heard reading till now, and so, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" comes on the listening ear with the whirr of a gang saw, or the roar of a bull of Bashan. The 51st Psalm and the 180th Psalm are thundered forth with such gestures and grimaces that in place of holding the mirror up to nature, if "Bumptiousness" would hold it up to himself, he might see how far he had departed from what the subject required. "Don't mouth it. I had as lief the town crier had spoke my words." Next comes carelessness. Carelessness does not know the day of the month, the Sunday in the calendar, nor the lesson; with carelessness there is no use for markers; he has to hunt up and down the little tablet in front of him, not thinking how long the said hunt, and the turning over and turning back the leaves of the Bible, keep the people and leave the impression that the shepherd shows thus that he is totally ignorant of what the food is that he is going to feed the flock with. Next comes indifference—thoughtless indifference, while reading. Indifference turns its head to see everyone that is coming in. Next comes emphasis. Emphasis lays stress on words which ought never to be accented, and passes by those which he thinks unworthy of notice. Emphasis is fierce on pronouns, he hits every mortal pronoun as if with a sledge hammer. Baring Gould says, "Possessive pronouns stopped the building of the tower of Babel." Verily the possessive pronouns under the Nasmyth hammer of emphasis stop the mental building up of any thought or idea of what the reader means. Good reading of the prayers and of the lessons would abolish this craving for sermons that is so fatally common at the present time. To read well and acceptably, you must know and understand what you are reading; you must have previous study. To hear a young man in the vestry ask what are the lessons, and then stand up and mumble and murder that glorious English classic (if we think nothing more of it), the 1st chapter of Genesis, or have to listen "to mangling done here" of that magnificent study, "The Lord sent Nathan unto David and he came unto him and said," etc., etc. And there is no excuse for all this cruel treatment of these sublime things. The paragraphs are enclosed and marked off, the punctuation is correct, the subjects grand, glorious, inspiring, heavenly, but alas! there is too often no thought and no previous careful study of how or in what acceptable manner those soul-moving compositions are to be presented to the listeners. A great handmaid for good, we submit, is missed by neglecting this most necessary, most attractive feature of our services. It was said of the celebrated Dean Kirwin, of Dublin, that crowds used to flock to his church to hear him repeat, before the sermon, the usual Collect, "Blessed Lord, who hast caused, all holy Scripture to be written for our learning," etc., etc. If these few lines of this short prayer could have such power of attracting, when uttered as they should be, how careful all ought to be to study every point of advantage in our matchless service, in order that in all its spiritual force, and wondrous sweetness, it may lose nothing at our hands, but being presented to our people as it is capable of being presented, might, with God's blessing, become, as it were, a fresh revelation, drawing into the Church many who still keep away from the courts of the living God.

#### THE WEATHER.

Some people say that the weather—that is, the changes of it—was invented for the purposes of conversation. There is much to be said for this theory; for but for this topic a good many of our acquaintances would be almost speechless. It is certain that since the recent severe frost, which occupies here about the same position as earthquakes do in less favoured countries, there has been much less interchange of—well, remarks—among our fellow citizens. With the inhabitants of Kamchatka, during their long monotonous days and nights, conversation languishes. A casual allusion to mock suns and aurora borealis exhausts their repertoire. Still, the notion that the weather should have been created, like a professional beauty, solely to be talked about, may be dismissed as fanciful. Our meteorological system was really invented for the consolation of the chronic invalid, the working of it, or rather its application, being placed in the hands of the faculty. "We are not feeling quite so well this morning, eh?" murmurs the doctor, who, like royal personages, uses the first person plural, not, as in their case, from egotism, but from an affectation of sympathy; the "we" is an amalgam of the patient and himself. "Not nearly so well," groans the invalid. "How can you expect to be otherwise?" says the physician, with a smile of compassion: "think of this east wind." "Shall I be really better when it stops, doctor?" "Well, of course." "Yet I felt very bad yesterday when the wind was not in the east." "It was in the north, which is worse, my dear sir." "But the day before there was no wind." "No, but there was damp in the air, and that is worse than all." It is difficult to find weather to do us any good, but the doctor sticks to it that it exists.

In the spring it is to be "when the warm weather comes on," and in the autumn with "the first dry frost." At last there really does come a day which not only benefits but cures us, when the doctor "takes his work home," and the undertaker observes of it that the gentleman has "a fine day for his funeral."—*James Payn.*

#### LAY HELP IN DIVINE SERVICE.

The question is not infrequently raised, How far may a layman lawfully take part in the conduct of divine service? May he read the Lessons in church? May he perform any other part of the service? Does the consent of the clergyman or of the bishop make any difference? May he perform the service of the Church in a meeting-house or other unconsecrated building? If these things, or any of them, are unlawful, what penalties attach to them? These are some of the questions which arise in connection with this matter, and on which we will suggest a few considerations to our readers. It is quite clear from the general tenor of the rubrics in the Prayer-Book that the Church contemplates that, as a rule, the whole service shall be performed by a priest, the words minister and priest being used interchangeably; but it has always been considered that (with the exception of the Holy Communion and of the Absolution) a deacon is equally qualified in this respect; and, indeed, at his ordination he is expressly authorized "to read the Gospel in the Church of God, and to preach the same." Again, by the Act of Uniformity, 1662 (sec. 2), it is enacted that the Morning and Evening Prayer contained in the Prayer-Book—"Shall upon every Lord's Day, and upon all