

This undoubted fact is easily accounted for. The Acts of the Apostles is for the most part a record of a series of missionary effort; it is not the record of a settled Church; and, while a mission to the Jews or to the heathen is going forward, preaching, from the necessity of the case, must occupy a much more prominent place than other Christian ordinances. Preaching is the tool in the hand of the Christian missionary by which he forces his way into the dense opposing mass of heathen thought and heathen feeling. But when, by God's assistance, he has triumphed and a population or a neighbourhood has accepted Christianity, preaching becomes, I do not say unimportant, —God forbid!—but of less importance relatively to other ordinances than was the case during the purely missionary stage of Church life. Until preaching has brought a soul to pray, and to desire and to use the means of grace, it is more important to that soul than anything else. But, when this great work is done, prayer and sacraments become, spiritually speaking, of much greater importance than preaching. It surely cannot be otherwise. If we know by experience what it is to hold communion, whether in prayer or sacraments, with the Infinite and Eternal Being, we cannot doubt that in doing this we are engaged in a much loftier, and more momentous duty than when we are only listening to a fellow-creature, a fellow-sinner, telling us what he knows about God, with whatever skill or with whatever faithfulness. Not that preaching is or ever will be without great value for the servants of Christ. It recalls to memory forgotten truths, it places before the soul new aspects of truth already recognized, it presents old truths in new aspects, it shows how the faith which does not change has the same power of helping from age to age an ever-changing world, it kindles affection, it fertilizes thought, it quickens the conscience, it rebukes presumption, it invigorates weakness, it consoles sorrow, it deepens the sense of man's helplessness and of God's omnipotence,—the two most fundamental convictions in a true religious life,—it keeps that world which we do not see, but which is so close to us and towards which we are hastening forward moment by moment, before the soul's eye, it is a reminder of eternity constantly uttered amidst the clamorous importunities, amidst the egrossing interests and concerns of time.

Do I say that it is all this, or that it ought to be?—for the question is often asked why preaching is in so many cases apparently powerless for real good, especially in quarters and in classes which are supposed to be more open than others to the influences of religion. We cannot challenge the substantial truth implied in the question. The evidence, alas! is before our eyes, indisputable, overwhelming. Well, brethren; one answer to that question is undoubtedly to be found in the weakness, the inconsistencies, the faults of character, the want of true spiritual insight, and of lofty and disinterested aims in us who are entrusted with this high and awful ministry. Beyond doubt we bear our treasure in earthen vessels, and it may well be that, ere it reaches those to whom we bear it it is discoloured or distorted or mutilated, or, at least, robbed of its lustre and its power by the hands that should guard it. It is not in forgetfulness of the responsibility for any such failure that may well in the eyes of the Eternal Justice be reckoned to us, the clergy, that I ask you to consider whether you, too, may not be, at least in part, responsible. May it not be now, as of old, that the word preached does not profit, not being mixed with faith in them that hear it? When the pulpit is looked to only, or chiefly, as furnishing interest or amusement not to be distinguished from that which is furnished by a magazine or a newspaper; when, as the hearer leaves the church, instead of asking himself the question, "What did that sermon say to me?" he only asks a neighbour the question, "Well

what do you think of Mr. So-and-So's performance?" preaching is not likely to do much real good. Now, as in Ezekiel's days, a sermon is too often regarded as "a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument;" now, as in Ezekiel's days, it is whispered from above: "They hear thy words, but they do them not." The modern Athenians who spend their time in nothing else but either to think or to hear some new thing, and are more than tolerant of irreverence or of heresy if they only can be gratified with novelty, would certainly, like their predecessors, have thought cheaply, very cheaply, of St. Paul. Every sermon, let us be sure, whatever its faults, contains some truths that it is well to be reminded of, and rebukes some sins which it is not prudent to forget. Now, as of old, it pleases God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. The best sermons, as we may deem them, are useless unless God the Holy Ghost condescends to make use of them; and the worst and the poorest may be ennobled when He impresses any phrase of them on a human soul.

May He lead you, my brethren, to make the most of anything which, amid whatever there be of weakness or error, can enlighten your understandings, or quicken your consciences, or warn your hearts; and may we all, preachers and hearers, think constantly and seriously of that Great Day when account must be taken of all that has been said, and of all that might have been said but has been left unsaid, of all that has been heard and acted on, and of all that has been heard and neglected or disobeyed. Time is short, eternity is long.

ECCLESIASTICAL NOTES.

DRIFTING INTO THE CHURCH.—A correspondent of the *Church Record* says:—On an average for several years, once each fortnight a minister of some one of the sects has come into the Church. Of these in the last two years, sixteen were Methodists, (representing five or six different kinds); three were Baptist (two kinds); six Congregationalists; five Presbyterians (3 kinds); five Reformed Episcopal (of whom at least three had previously been Church clergymen); Romanist, six; Dutch Reformed, two; Adventists, three; German Reformed, Unitarian, Universalist, Campbellite, Jew, Secularist (lecturer), one each. Of these twenty-eight were received in 1883-4, and twenty-four in 1884-5. It is probable that there were other instances which did not come to my notice. It may not be generally known that the late Bishop of Florida was once a Methodist theological student. He made the change while yet a student. A Bishop told me he was sure not over half the clergy were born in the Church. In view of this fact is it not a silly fear that the Church will be perverted by receiving so many converts from the sects? *Converts* they are in almost every case, and often better informed and more thoroughly imbued with "the Church idea" than some of those native "and to the manor born."

THE BISHOPS AT THE MANSION HOUSE.—At the annual banquet which it is now customary for the Lord Mayor of London to give to the members of the English Episcopate, the Archbishop of Canterbury returned thanks to the "Health of the Bishops." Referring to the visit of the representatives of India and the Colonies to London, his Grace said he would not call them our *colonial visitors*, but looked upon them as **ENGLISHMEN COMING HOME FOR A HOLIDAY**, for it was as HOME that they regarded England. They had come here with a great many new ideas, and he thought he should be wanting in his duty if he did not call attention to the Church federation which was begun so long ago, and had united the colonies with the mother country with such close and strong ties. Forty years ago there were seven, while at the pres-

ent moment there were SEVENTY-FIVE colonial dioceses, every one of which looked to England for help and encouragement. The Church, therefore, had prepared the way, if federation was to come, by founding those ties of religious federation upon which alone a real federation could be built. Adverting to the subject of Church endowments, the Archbishop said he knew of an instance in one county where in 520 parishes there were 195 which had no form of religious worship or instruction except that which was given by the old endowments of the Church of England, and in the same county there were 450 parishes out of the 520 in which there were no resident ministers, except ministers of the Church of England. That illustrates the work done by the Church endowments. They had just completed an inquiry into the work done by the voluntary system of 1885, and they had found that for charitable purposes, clubs, sick-clubs, and hospitals of every kind, and for the preservation and restoration of these ancient fabrics, which were our pride, there had been raised in the county of Kent alone the large sum of £208,000, and that without effort whatever.

NEWS FROM THE HOME FIELD.

Gathered specially for this Paper by Our Own Correspondents.

DIOCESE OF NOVA SCOTIA.

MAHONE BAY.—A memorably pleasant affair took place in this parish, Thursday, Aug. 19th, at Martin's River, on the Post road, four miles east of above town. The corner-stone was laid of a new church to be named at consecration St. Martin's, after the celebrated Bishop of Tours, who divided his military cloak with the beggar, whose day, Martinmas, is Nov. 12th. Part of the shell of the building is already up, a fair idea can be formed of what promises to be a neat attractive structure on one of the most commanding sites on the whole road between Halifax and Liverpool. It certainly reflects great credit on the taste and skill of the master-builder, Mr. David Zinc, living near by. It already shows what unity and well directed efforts can accomplish, where the heart is sound and the purse disposed to smile. By 2.45 p.m. the following clergy of the Deanery were together (the absence of the rest, unavoidably detained at home, being regretted):—Rev. Messrs. W. H. Snyder, R. D. Rector, E. A. Harris Curate, H. Stamer, R. C. Caswall, W. H. Groser, G. H. Butler, G. D. Harris, J. Spencer and C. E. T. Easton (which last we are glad to welcome amongst us in this Deanery). At 3 o'clock Evensong having been read by Messrs. Spencer and Easton, the Lessons by Messrs. Butler and E. A. Harris, the large congregation of fully 400 paid close and careful attention to a very interesting, instructive and edifying sermon on Zech. IV, 7, by Mr. Caswall, of Lunenburg. The singing by a large double choir of canticles and hymns was very stirring and hearty, even in the absence of any instrumental accompaniment. There was taken up in connection with the service the neat sum of \$100.51, \$60 of which came, we believe, from one zealous parishioner alone!

After the Offertory all reassembled outdoors and witnessed the placing of the corner-stone by Jas. Langille, Esq. After "The Church's One Foundation, &c.," was sung Messrs. Spencer, Groser and G. D. Harris made brief addresses, and the ceremony concluded with Doxology and Benediction. In the stone was placed and sealed as usual a tin box, to which were consigned the following contents:—"Lunenburg Co. Times, Aug. 18th, 1886;" "Lunenburg Co. Progress, Aug. 18th, 1886;" "Our Missionary News, 1st No. July, 1886;" "Canadian Missionary, Vol. 5, No. 1;" Book