

WESLEY AND THE BISHOPS.

BY CANON MASON.

It is with a feeling of deeper grief and shame that we burn to think of the mutual attitude of the Methodist leaders and the Church. People often speak as if Wesley had either left the Church of which he was an ordained minister, or else had been expelled from it. Neither of these statements has any truth in it; though the former is nearer to the truth than the latter. 'I am not afraid,' wrote Samuel Wesley to his mother, 'the Church should excommunicate Jack (discipline is at too low an ebb), but that he should excommunicate the Church. It is pretty near it.' Archbishop Potter, by whom John Wesley was ordained, received them, says Charles Wesley, with 'great affection, and cautioned us to give no more umbrage than was necessary, to forbear exceptionable phrases, and to keep to the doctrines of the Church.' They told him that they expected persecution, but that they would abide by the Church till her articles and homilies were repealed. When, somewhat later, someone complained to the Archbishop of the conduct of the brothers, the gentle and scholarly old man replied, 'Those gentlemen are irregular; but they have done much good, and I pray God to bless them.' Edmund Gibson was Bishop of London when the Methodist work rose into its first full vigour—a man of great learning and solid piety. The brethren waited upon him of their own accord to explain their doctrine of assurance to him. 'If by assurance,' he said, 'you mean an inward persuasion whereby a man is conscious in himself, after examining his life by the law of God, and weighing his own sincerity, that he is in a state of salvation, and acceptable to God, I do not see how any good Christian can be without such an assurance.' They begged him, as St. Paul commands, to receive no accusation against them, but at the mouth of two or three witnesses, to which the Bishop answered, 'By no means; and you may have free access to me at all times.' A few weeks later, indeed, Charles Wesley came to him again, and informed him that he had been rebaptizing persons who had received Baptism from Dissenters, no which a skirmish followed. Charles Wesley said, 'I shall exercise my ministry in any part of the known world.' The Bishop said, 'Do you not know that no man can exercise parochial duty in London without my leave? I have power to inhibit you.' 'Does your Lordship inhibit me?' asked Wesley. 'Oh,' said the Bishop, 'why will you push matters to an extreme?' Such behaviour was not calculated to make a bishop favourable; but when some years afterwards the churchwardens of St. Bartholomew the Great complained to the Bishop that their rector very frequently invited Wesley to preach in their church, Bishop Gibson replied: 'What would you have me do? I have no right to hinder him. Mr. Wesley is a clergyman, regularly ordained, and under no ecclesiastical censures.' And so the matter ended.

But the most dangerous brush which the Wesleys had with episcopal authority, as in the case of a more celebrated man even than Potter or Gibson. The great Butler, author of the 'Analogy,' was Bishop of Bristol, a man of no narrow spirit or ecclesiastical bigotry, and most assuredly no enemy to Scriptural holiness or inward religion. Wesley's preaching was at that time sending people into convulsions, which Wesley made no attempt to discourage. He waited upon the famous prelate. 'Well, sir,' said Butler, 'since you ask my advice, I will give it freely. You have no business here; you are not commissioned to preach in the diocese; therefore, I advise you to go hence.' 'My lord,' answered Wesley, 'my business on earth is to do what good I can. Wherever,

therefore, I think I can do most good, there must I stay so long as I think so.' The fanatical way in which Wesley maintained his opinion as inspired against all known rules of Church order shocked the law-abiding simplicity of that great mind and heart to its very depth. 'Sir,' said Bishop Butler to John Wesley, 'the pretending to extraordinary revelations and gifts of the Holy Ghost is a horrid thing, a very horrid thing.'

No human being in this life is free from all infirmities and prejudices, not even Joseph Butler, but it ought to make us hesitate before we take it for granted that Wesley was always in the right, when we look at that interview between him and the greatest thinker and one of the most liberal minded and holiest men of the century. If Bishop Butler wished to get rid of him out of his diocese, we can hardly wonder if the ordinary parochial clergy resented his unceremonious intrusion into their parishes. It is true that they did so, at least, for many years. In 1738—the year of his conversion—Wesley speaks of being 'almost uniformly excluded from the pulpits of the Established Church.' During all the latter part of his life he preached everywhere in the churches and was the honoured guest of bishops, and no one would have dreamed of questioning his right to be considered in full communion.

NEWS FROM THE HOME FIELD.

DIOCESE OF NOVA SCOTIA.

ACADIA MINES.—This church was beautifully adorned for the great festival of Easter. On the super-altar stood six vases of tulips, camellias and other choice flowers, while on the altar, just below the cross, stood a vase of lilies. On the pulpit was placed a vase of beautiful roses. The font was adorned with geraniums, moss and trailing vines, and at the end of the desk and on each window sill in the nave stood pots of primroses. The whole reflecting great credit upon the taste and generosity of the ladies, who undertook thus to pay honor to their risen Lord. The congregations were large, and the services bright and hearty. The choir did good service in their rendering of the canticles, hymns and anthems. Fifty-eight partook at the two celebrations. This was not satisfactory as more were expected; but we hope for better things in the near future.

The parish meeting on Monday evening was a successful one. Owing to the parish having been vacant during a portion of the past year, there was a somewhat large deficit, this was grappled with in a cheerful and earnest manner. Measures were adopted for wiping it off at an early day, and preventing its occurring again. The wardens were re-elected, and the meeting closed with a general feeling of hopefulness.

HALIFAX.—St. George's.—The services on Easter day were of a very hearty character. There were three celebrations of the Holy Eucharist at 7:30, 9 and after Matins. At the first service there were 124 communicants, which speaks well for the indefatigable labours of the Rector, nine years ago when he first came into the parish at the early service there were only about twelve present. The singing was of a congregational character, and was very heartily joined in. In the afternoon there was a children's service, when there was a very fair attendance. On the whole it was, as it always ought to be a very happy and joyous day.

At the Parish meeting held on Easter Monday there was a fair assembly, but not so good as should have been. The Rector in his address mentioned the fact that each Easter as they come round are the milestones on the road of time. He then reviewed the work done during the year, also of the various societies. He thanked specially the ladies who had brought to a successful issue the object that was set on foot last December in the matter of the curate.

The old wardens were re-elected for the ensuing year. The meeting was dismissed by the Rector giving the blessing at 10:30, after a very happy and enjoyable time.

THE COTTAGE HOSPITAL FOR SPRINGHILL MINES.

To Editor of the Church Guardian:

Dear sir,—I gratefully acknowledge the receipt of the following subscriptions:

Miss Eliza Ritchie \$10; Rev. Dyson Hague, for 'St. Paul's Bed,' \$100; A friend in Huron \$2; Rev. F. Codd \$1; Rev. C. Lutz \$2 50; Mrs. George Cox \$5; Rev. W. S. Morris, offertory, \$25.50; Blank \$1; two orphans of Toronto \$2; Rev. S. Jones Hansford \$5; Rev. Robert Wilson \$5; Lord Bishop of Algoma \$5; Rev. Dr. Partridge, offertory at St. George's Halifax \$48; Rev. E. F. Wilson \$5; Rev. Dr. C. J. S. Bathune \$10; a friend in Yarmouth \$5; Rev. Dr. J. Brock \$5; Blank, Toronto, \$1; Miss Stems \$5; two friends in Lunenburg \$25; Rev. W. S. Covert, offertory at St. Paul's Church, Grand Manan, \$7. Total \$276.

The sum of three thousand dollars is needed, and I sincerely hope that Canadian Churchmen will send us that amount. If my brother clergymen would give only a week day service offertory the hospital could be erected and become a great blessing at once. One clergyman writes: 'I send you \$5; if all who received your circular would do the same the hospital would be a fact.'

Two of the esteemed parish visitors were visiting one of the wounded lads last week and found a man taking a hardened poultice off a terrible scalp wound, and then scraping the wound with a jackknife. Both the ladies burst into tears at the distressing sight. The Cottage Hospital and trained nursing will change that for a better and more merciful order of things.

I remain, yours sincerely,

W. CHAS. WILSON.

Springhill Mines, March 31st, 1891.

DIOCESE OF FREDERICTON.*

DORCHESTER, N.B.—At the Easter meeting held in the school room on Monday last, Hiram W. Palmer and Mariner G. Tweed were elected Churchwardens, and W. Hazen Chapman Vestry clerk. The following gentlemen were elected vestrymen: John Hickman, David Chapman, J. B. Forster, J. F. Teed, E. C. Palmer, Charles Millar, Bradford H. Gilbert, John Johnson, Willard Wilbur, Hon. D. L. Hanington, J. W. Y. Smith and Albert J. Chapman. J. B. Forster was also elected auditor.

The lay representatives to the Synod are Hon. D. L. Hanington and John B. Forster, Esq; substitutes, H. W. Palmer and Bradford H. Gilbert.

The delegates to the General Committee of the Diocesan Church Society are Hiram W. Palmer and John B. Forster; substitutes, J. Roy Campbell, jr., and Bradford H. Gilbert.

The accounts of the outgoing Wardens were certified by the auditor to be correct, and presented an excellent showing.

The Rector, as chairman of the repair's committee, presented the statement of repairs account, which having been previously audited and found correct was on motion approved and ordered to be filed.

Votes of thanks from the parishioners were made and recorded to several persons who had made generous gifts and donations to the alterations. The meeting was largely attended and was characterized by the best of feeling. The only regrettable circumstance connected with the proceedings was the retirement, on account of ill health, of Mr. David Chapman from the office of Churchwarden, a responsible position that he had honourably filled for the long term of twenty one years. On motion of Hon. D. L. Hanington, seconded by John Hickman, Esq, and spoken to feelingly by the chair, the motion was passed by an unanimous