

we answer such an enquirer for authority; we do not point you to any earthly infallibility; the very idea of such an authority is interfering with the one and only Headship of Christ over His Church; the thought of such leadership is repugnant to the thought of the Holy Spirit, who is inwardly leading His people. Let us hear what the Spirit says to the Churches, and not forsake such glorious guidance, to seek for the mechanical help of an outward, visible authority. There is a natural desire to force others to decide for us what we ought to decide for ourselves, but does God send us by short cuts to wealth or fame? Does he bestow truth from the outside, or develop it within us? He gives us the authority of parents and teachers, but only to shadow forth the divine fatherhood, to lead the soul out of dependence on the less into communion with the greater, that the child or pupil may recognize the divine and invisible. Such authority need not be infallible in order to be helpful; indeed, the reverse is true. It is helpful quite in proportion as it is influential and not authoritative. The Church follows in the steps of her Master; she advances by degrees, gains first a practical working assurance of truth, and then a certainty. God hates sin more than He hates error, and means us to be free from both, but He has made neither impossible. These things are not revealed to or through flesh and blood, but through the Spirit to immortal spirits. It is no outward teaching, but the inspiring Spirit who leads into all truth, and may He, whose coming as the only infallible guide of His Church we are about to celebrate, give to us all a new out-pouring of His spirit. May He graft in our hearts the love of His name, may He increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of His great mercy keep us in the same, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

#### THE BISHOP OF OXFORD ON THE COWLEY BROTHERHOOD.

The Bishop of Oxford, speaking at the conclusion of the ceremony of laying the foundation-stone of the new church at Cowley St. John, said:—

"We are met here this morning to dedicate and to implore the blessing of God upon a design which implies at once a great effort and a great experiment. In all humility we are offering the effort with much anxious consideration, and yet making the experiment in the assurance of a good hope. It is the beginning of a new and well-planned church, to be the centre of the work of the Brotherhood so well known to us all as the Society of St. John the Evangelist; a church which is, I say, to be the central home of the corporate life of the society, from which the members will go out helped with the prayers of their brethren, and to which they will return from time to time for rest and refreshing after work done or attempted for God. He will bless their going out and coming in. The effort is no doubt a great one; it needs no words of mine to prove that. The personal friends of the society, the friends, moreover, who have a less personal interest in the work of the Brothers, but a greater interest in the character of the Brotherhood, all who are disposed to cherish a good work undertaken in the circumstances in which this work is undertaken, will find the completion of the church of which we are placing the foundation stone, a consummation not to be achieved without a good deal of liberal sacrifice. It must not be said that we have not counted the cost before we set to the work. We most earnestly trust that what we are beginning will be brought to a good end, and that He to Whose honour and service we are offering it will turn the hearts of those who are able to help with a liberal hand. And, as an experiment, we want prayers and sympathies for the work. This day's ceremony is, as it seems to me, a more public and distinct act of committal to a principle scarcely as yet adequately recognised, a more distinct act of committal to the theory of work by Brotherhoods, than has as yet, in these days of ours, been ventured. We have had many theories ventilated, committees and reports of convocations, discussions in conferences, arguments and correspondences about the principle. We have had in the growth of Sisterhoods examples and cautions, proofs and analogies full of possibilities and of suggestions of contingencies. The Brotherhood of St. John has faced the problem, and has now for many years had experience both of the helps and hindrances, both of favor and failure, of work and suffering. I do not doubt that there have been mistakes in its history; if there had not been there would have been no such trial and testing of it as now warrants us in what I have called a committal to it. But there is a distinct record of great and noble achievement such as humble industrious work and absolute self-denial, and only such work and self-denial, can compass. I am not going to offer a tribute that in my mouth would have no special meaning; the witness from East and West, from England, India, Africa, and America attests the appreciation as well as the earnestness of the labours of the Brothers. God has given them a right to your prayers and also to your confidence.

And the very foundation of this church is a new proof that they may be trusted. Still, it is not all at once that we can expect to see such examples of self-denying work approve themselves to a people that has so much to learn as perhaps we have. The very spirit of self-denial must make impossible the use of the *ad captandum* tricks and sensational advertisements which seem, in the region of experiment, to wear a look of desperate adventure, or of audacious innovation. Most classes of society to whom these appeal, the many good and excellent people whose sympathies respond at once to the sensational and emotional, are slow to recognize silent and modest work. And yet, greatly as the sympathy of all such is to be desired, we rest assured that the acceptance of the work is not dependent on it; there are many ways of doing good, and no one design except that of the Master Builder can comprehend them all, and those who work with their eye to the Master's hand do not look down on or disparage one another. We know all about the earthen vessels, and where the excellency is of the work and of the reward. One word more, this church is to be the church of the Brotherhood; but it will also be a chapel or sanctuary for the parish in which it is placed, that is, not a mere college chapel, but an auxiliary to the parochial work of Cowley St. John, and as such it will, I trust, have an organization which will be of great benefit. There is no feature in the surroundings of Oxford which strikes people who have known the place for fifty years, or indeed for thirty years, more forcibly than the growth of Cowley and the accumulation of population on what we remember as open fields and marsh. The beautiful church which the parish now possesses was only begun, I think, in 1868, and it is since then, in twenty-six years, that the great growth has come. The place is growing still; here, at all events, is a proof and illustration of what more must be done, I trust, in God's name, of what will be done, in the same fear and trembling, courage and confidence in which we are laying this stone."

#### THE PUBLIC READING OF THE CLERGY.

BY J. F. CRUMP.

There is amongst the laity a widespread feeling of dissatisfaction with the public reading of the clergy, who are very likely unconscious of it, for their congregations would not complain to them about it. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend," says Solomon, but friends are not over fond of giving wounds, however well intentioned, though the friends of individual clergymen here and there do occasionally give them a hint. The clergy, therefore, as a body, may be going on in blissful ignorance that any fault is being found with their reading. Now and then they may see in the newspapers occasional grumbles, but they may interpret them only as indications of individual, not of general dissatisfaction.

The complaint made by congregations is that, however naturally a man may talk and read in ordinary life, as soon as he goes into the reading desk he alters his style entirely, almost to the extent in some cases of partially disguising his voice.

Every profession has its traditions, and each member comes under their influence. A certain style of reading has been in vogue in the clerical profession for many years, and the majority of the clergy seem fast bound by the chain of habit and tradition. How great must be the force of these two influences, which compel many clergy when reading the Bible or the Liturgy to depart from their ordinary tone and adopt one which might be variously described as "monotonous," "whining," "dolorous," "lachrymose," "lugubrious," "declamatory," or "denunciatory."

These peculiar styles no doubt originate in some cases in a reverent feeling that the Word of God should be read in a tone of devotion and solemnity befitting its sacred character. But, however good the feeling which prompts this peculiar style of reading, it proceeds from an erroneous assumption. It takes no account of the various styles in which the Bible is composed. If it had been all didactic or devotional there would have been some reason for the practice, but even then not to the extent to which it is carried out.

The Bible is made up of passages of very dissimilar character, requiring a most varied style for their proper rendering. There is the purely "narrative"—simple matters of history, which require to be read in the same way as a book of history, namely, naturally and as a simple recital of facts.

Again, there are the "poetical" parts—passages of extreme pathos and beauty, which are calculated to stir the feelings and awaken the emotions. These evidently require to be read with the same feeling and expression as would be employed if they occurred in any secular work. Passages which are intended to convey instruction, warning, exhortation or the like, should, of course, find their natural and appropriate expression. The devotional parts, it is scarcely necessary to say, should be read in that devout and solemn tone which their character suggests.

In a book embracing such a variety of subjects, composed of so many different styles, containing the thoughts of writers of such widely different epochs and mental culture, it seems plain to common sense that no one style of reading can be universally applicable to the whole. But to read all parts alike either in a solemn, didactic tone, or in a wearisome monotone, to make no difference between such bare statement of fact as that one of the kings of Israel ascended the throne at a certain age, and, say, the touching scene of raising Lazarus from the dead, is to sacrifice a great part, not only of the æsthetic beauty, but of the religious instruction. All the effect of contrast between the different kinds of passages and the hold on the attention which results from varied intonation are lost, and the hearers are deprived of the charm and deeper impression which arises from inflection of voice, and the play of intelligence and feeling which appropriate reading gives to poetic, devotional and pathetic passages.

Then why should the clergy make such a wide departure from the pronunciation of ordinary life as they do in their public reading of words ending in "ed," as "blessed," pronounced "bless-ed"; talked, pronounced "talk-ed." It is possible that this peculiarity may have arisen from an idea that additional emphasis is given by making a monosyllable into a dissyllable; or it might be that our ancestors, generations ago, so pronounced those words (most of which are really dissyllables), but by custom long since pronounced as monosyllables, and the tradition has survived in the public reading of the Bible, but in no other kind of reading.

There are one or two other common habits in reading which mar, or rather, altogether deprive it of effect. One is the habit of dropping the voice at the end of the sentence. Another form of the same habit is that of giving undue prominence of tone to the first syllable of a word, exhausting, as it were, the vocal effort over the first part of the word, and dropping the voice so low in the latter as to make it inaudible, or, at any rate, little better than a whisper. The effect of this is that only the first syllables of many words travel any distance from the speaker, and the hearers farthest off are reduced, if they can keep up their attention, to guess at their meaning.

Whether this style of reading arises from carelessness or from some mistaken notion that it has an air of impressiveness, it is difficult to tell. One thing is certain, that it is a violation of that canon of good reading which prescribes that every syllable and every consonant should be sounded. "Take care of the consonants, and the vowels will take care of themselves," is a well known axiom, both in singing and reading.

Within the last few years public reading has been raised to the rank of an art. Men of culture have made a profession of it, giving readings and recitations from our best authors to the various literary institutes spread over the country. Nothing but genuine study of the works of these authors has enabled them to make these readings so attractive. Their success has made reading aloud quite a favourite occupation, both in public and in private. An intelligent reader, who enters into the feeling of his author and endeavours to give expression to the thoughts which inspired the words he is reading, often reveals to his hearers fresh meanings and new beauties, which, in a quiet perusal by themselves, they have failed to perceive. Thus a new sense, as it were, has been discovered. The public taste has been gradually educated to a much higher standard, and people have become more critical and fastidious. As a consequence they are no longer satisfied with the mechanical perfunctory reading of a book like the Bible, which contains more beauty, tenderness and sublimity than the whole of our literature put together. No sensible person would advocate a dramatic or sensational style in reading the Bible, but there is a happy medium between the dry expressionless manner now in vogue and an exaggerated theatrical rendering.

(To be Continued.)

#### Home & Foreign Church News

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENTS.

##### QUEBEC.

In Archdeacon's Roe's letter, for "St. Honorius" read "Athanasius," for "a fuller description" read "discussion," and for "one thing is made clearer," read "clear."

LENNOXVILLE.—An impression has got abroad that the Convocation is on the 29th June. It will be 28th June (Thursday). Bishop Hall, of Vermont, will be the preacher at the service (11 a.m.), and degrees will be conferred at 8. Bishop Hall and Dean Innes have accepted the degree of D.D., *jure dignitatis*, and Dr. Lubeck of New York (who will be one of the speakers at Convocation), will receive the honorary status of D.C.L.