

sign that amongst the younger clergy there are many who are not afraid to venture on new methods; to show by the simplicity of their own lives that they do not come amongst the people as 'lords over God's heritage, but as examples to the flock;' to adapt the services of the Church to the needs of the people; to interest themselves in all that appertains to their moral and social welfare; to band themselves together in brotherhoods, or communities, in order to meet the special circumstances of a parish or of a mission district. And I doubt not that such honest endeavours will be accepted of God and blessed by Him. These men are taking advantage of the opportunity which is open to them to make Christ known to the people whom He loves; they are faithful servants to Him and to His Church in this land. "The mass of society," it has been said, 'is anxiously seeking a belief which shall not be at issue with the moral sense of educated man.' May we not extend this assertion to men generally? It is for the ministers of the Church of Christ to commend themselves and their teaching to the conscience of men and of nations in the sight of God to the people. Can we conceive of a graver or more awful responsibility than this?

BISHOPS.

At the thirty-fourth anniversary of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa, among other good things, the Rev. Canon Scott Holland said: "And I do think that to-night we might rejoice in the discovery, shall I say, that Church work without a bishop is in a state of suspended animation. For I suppose that the great mark that has been set on our age is this: when the historian comes to review it and comes to note down the real significance of the fifty or sixty years through which we have lived, it will not be only that Queen Victoria reigned, or the Reform Bill came about, or the London County Council was born, or the House of Lords was abolished, or any trifles of that kind at all; but he will say, looking back, it was the age in which they re-invented bishops, re-discovered bishops. I think that is the cardinal secret of the age in which we live. It is more remarkable, if I may say so, than the re-discovery of golf; that is the other great thing that has happened in these days. There is a thing that has been lying to hand all these years, and Mr. Gore is always comparing it to the Ornaments Rubric, with its caddies, its tees, its bunkers, its links, and nobody noticed it, and nobody ever said a word for it but in some remote corner of Scotland, where I believe they were playing. But suddenly there comes a day when we re-discover golf, though it was always there, and now the whole world is possessed of golf. Now, the bishops were always there, with their gaiters and their buttons; but we went behind the gaiters and the buttons—we have discovered the Apostolic man. And I think the discovery is so remarkable because we know that it has gone on in two directions at once, in theory and practice; and the two have conspired together to reproduce this creature who has emerged out of the process. Of course, we all know the story of the rediscovery of the theory of bishops. The great Tractarian movement spent its force in trying to persuade some good-humoured country gentlemen living in palaces that they were bishops; that was the great point they set themselves to bring out. We know, perhaps, some of us in this room, how Cardinal Newman, in one of his naughtiest moods, quite one of his wickedest, has described the extraordinary sensation among these country gentlemen when

Mr. Keble's poems first began to appear, and they began to hear that they were mysterious beings, lifting holy hands to ban and bless, and doing all sorts of strange functions that they had hardly dreamt of, and they could not believe it. But they had to believe it; the Church party went on believing in them in spite of themselves. And these poor unhappy men used to start up at their dinner tables and find people kneeling on the floor and kissing their hands and asking for their Apostolic benediction; and they said, "Good gracious! go away, do," and everything they could think of; and then they made speeches at the time and charges, saying how disagreeable it all was. And, to their enormous surprise, you know, the charges were taken very seriously, and people went over to Rome, because a bishop said something, and they never dreamt of their words having so much importance. But still this great Church movement went on, and still it worked on these people, and at last it was like—if one may say so—you will not misunderstand the parallel, but I remember a dream of Artemus Ward's; he dreamt that he was being beaten over the head by his wife with a broomstick, and when he woke up he found it was true. Now these bishops had been dreaming they were Apostolic men, and they woke up and found it was true. That was the great point about them, and as Mr. Noel, of Oxford, used to say, those mitres that they confined to their spoons they found they had really to put on their heads, and there they are."

NOTES ON PREACHING.

NO. V.—THE PREACHER AND HIS AGE.

The preacher deals with eternal verities. To a large extent his testimony is the same from generation to generation. The actual substance of many a sermon by St. Augustine would be the substance of many a sermon suited for the nineteenth century. Yet there is a difference—a difference of modes of thought, of customs, of associations, a difference in our actual knowledge of the world about us; and these differences will tinge our thoughts, our words, and our whole manner of presentation. In regard to this subject, then, of the preacher's relation to his age, there are, as usual, two dangers, two extremes. We may exaggerate the importance of the age in which we live by a kind of assumption that no previous age possessed any knowledge or life worth considering, or we may despise it, and go on thinking and speaking as our fathers and grandfathers did, ignoring the mental conditions and claims by which we are surrounded. Both of these extremes are to be avoided. It was admirably said by Schiller: "The poet should be the child of his age, but woe to him if he be its favourite or its slave." Let us then clearly understand that it is our duty to recognize the age in which we live, to understand it, to appreciate it, to adapt ourselves in all lawful ways to its needs and demands. It is, at least, our own age, the age in which the Providence of God has cast our lot; and, therefore, perhaps we might say, the best age for us, if only we have the grace to take it so. We should then reverence it as the gift of God, as we reverence humanity. By such reverence we do not proclaim that humanity is perfect. We know better. But it is God's creature. And in the same way we reverence our age. And rightly. The senseless cry of the "good old times" is tolerable only because we find it has its place in all ages of the world. We find it in Ecclesiastes, with a rebuke. We find on the lips of the aged Nestor in Homer. Well, then, let us be patient even of this nonsense.

But it is nonsense. We see the past through the haze of time. Romance has taken the place of reality. Evils are softened, whereas the same evils, or those which are much less serious, stand clear and strong before our eyes in the present. Perhaps there is just a suspicion of conceit in the cry; and it is often pleasant to the audience. The preacher seems to say: These are terrible times; but you and I see all that, lament it, and are worthy of better times! Yes, and we lose power over our own age by this want of sympathy with its spirit. If we are thus at cross-purposes with the mind of the age in which we live, we shall be destitute of power to influence it for good. Let the preacher who realizes his responsibility weigh this consideration. Besides, it may be worth while to call to mind the achievements of the age to which we belong—of the present century, for example. We have the steam engine, steamboats, railways, electric telegraphs, etc., etc. We have the most wonderful discoveries in science. We know, as our forefathers did not know, how this world of ours has been built up. If we think of the triumphs of geology, chemistry, and botany alone, we may well stand aghast. To ignore them is to be profoundly ungrateful. Let us be thankful that in one respect we have improved. We no longer assume that science is, as a matter of course, opposed to revelation. We are no longer so foolish as to quote passages from a religious book in order to disprove the plainest and most cogently proved truths of science. We are quite sure now that truth cannot conflict with truth, and so we are geologists, and, in a sense, evolutionists, without our faith in Christianity being impaired. We believe that Bacon and Pascal were right when they declared that antiquity was the childhood of the world, and this is its old age. And yet we must beware of exaggeration. We must not suppose that a thing is necessarily true because it is now believed—still less because it has just been discovered. They are right who bid us "stand upon the old ways," not because they are old, but because they have stood the test of time—they are both old and new. And this may teach the preacher how he should deal with new questions which arise for solution. He must do so with boldness and with caution—with boldness, because he holds in his hands eternal truth by which every new claimant may, in a measure, be verified; yet with caution, lest in his eagerness to recognize the new, he may let-go the old which is precious.

This caution must be exercised in dealing with the Scriptures, with the current translation, with the headings of the chapters. Bishop Carpenter says to the preacher: "Do not begin your sermon by announcing that the date at the heading of this book is 'all wrong.' Do not abruptly declare that all the views which have ever been held by anybody on the subject have been 'conclusively proved to be incorrect.'" Above all, let the preacher deal tenderly with the sacred text, and not exhibit what may be a very cheap kind of learning in making corrections. The actual authorized version teaches no false doctrine, seldom needs correction in order to bring out the meaning. Perhaps the preacher would do well, in such cases, simply to quote from the revised version as nearer to the original. In no respect will a preacher show himself more distinctly to be "in touch" with his age than in his mastery of the language of the age. We hear sermons continually of which we say: "Very good indeed. Nothing wrong in them, but they are 50 or 60 or 100 years old."

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