

In conclusion, we cannot but congratulate Dr. Shelton upon one fact, which, to our minds, is a greater glory to his church than even its beautiful architecture; we mean the larger amount of *free room* which it contains than is usual in American churches. We wish in our hearts that he and his liberal and energetic flock had seen their way clear to make it altogether a "free church"; that had indeed been a holy joy. The church in the United States is already the home of probably a preponderance of their intellect and no small portion of their piety; God grant it may soon be the haven of their room. In the mean time we will thank God, and take courage, for the large amount of scriptural and catholic truth which is found within her holy borders; believing, as an English Wesleyan minister of high standing, who had travelled extensively in the United States, told us many years ago, "that the Protestant Episcopal Church was doing decidedly more good than any other denomination therein"; his own Methodism not excepted.

Church Matters at Clackington in 1875.

CHAPTER XV.

THE evening service on the Sunday of the bishop's visit to Clackington was even more fully attended than the morning service had been, and long before the last bell had rung there was not a vestige of standing room in any corner of the church. The bishop had proposed that Mr. Stowton should preach and that he himself should read the prayers. Our worthy friend, however, had so earnestly entreated that the proposed arrangement should be reversed, that the bishop seemed almost disposed to give way; and when Mr. Stowton had slightly opened the vestry door, and saw the mass of people who were wedged into the church, he called the bishop's attention to it, and with such an imploring look and tone besought him not to disappoint them, that resistance to his wish seemed impossible. Accordingly the old sermon was pocketed with a degree of satisfaction and relief that it is not very easy to describe—the prayers were read with unwonted life and animation, and the choir, having practised between the services for three mortal hours without intermission, fairly out-did themselves.

The bishop on ascending the pulpit opened

the Bible, and, without any notes, expounded in an exceedingly clear, simple, yet striking manner, a portion of the second lesson; his style in the explanatory part of his observations was almost conversational, and his illustrations, while of the most familiar kind, were at the same time so well chosen and appropriate, that they left the most vivid impression upon the mind. Having explained the truths contained in the words he had read, and pointed out the duties resulting from them, he gradually relinquished the comparatively familiar tone in which he had been speaking, and as he passed on to exhortation to the performance of those duties, and set forth the love of our Lord to His elect people as the high and generous motive to obedience, his words became more choice and his sentences more flowing; his eye grew brighter, his action more animated, and his whole soul was breathing in every look and word. Thoughts of beauty came gushing up—now that he was untrammelled by any manuscript—as though they sprung irrepressibly from an overflowing fountain within, and they came clothed in words of power and pathos, such as he would probably never have put down upon paper in the quietude of his study; yet all was chastened by perfect taste and reverent feeling, and deep solicitude for the spiritual well-being of those to whom he spoke. He was eloquent indeed, and that in no ordinary degree; but all felt, that instead of being the result of studied oratory, it was the unrestrained and almost unconscious outpouring of an eloquence that was natural, prompted by a high and earnest spirit.

The good people of Clackington were completely taken by storm, and nothing was heard on every side but commendations of the bishop's sermon. Preaching, especially during the nineteenth century, had been exalted and almost idolized, too frequently at the expense of the more important ordinances of the church, and now it was made the means of gaining influence for one who was bent on using it for the purpose of promoting his people's welfare, by recalling to their minds high and holy doctrines which they had forgotten or disbelieved, and christian duties which they neglected and disliked; it was a sort of poetic justice that an ordinance unduly magnified should become the instrument of restoring others as unduly depreciated.