

Our Contributors.

The Organ; A Parable.

BY REV. PROFESSOR JORDAN, D. D.

I arrived at Sunderland in the afternoon of May 17th, and reading the local journal after tea, I noted that the organ of St. Peter's Church was to be re-opened, that Canon Body of Durham would preach the sermon, and there would be an "augmented choir." As, though once a dweller, I am now a visitor in England, I determined to take this early opportunity of attending a Church of England service. I was told that St. Peter's was a small church which really ought to be a mission church, that there had been trouble there over ritual, and in fact a relative of mine had come full tilt against the law by helping to expel a "reredo," for it seems that so far as the law is concerned it is a much easier thing to place a structure in the church than it is to take it out. The present Vicar has the reputation of being "low," and certainly the church has that appearance. There service had no extravagances or eccentricities; it was of course, full choral, that is, the things which may be "said or sung" were all sung; and the singing with large preponderance of boys' voices, was quite attractive, and in some respects inspiring.

The church, which stands in a narrow side street, not far from the busy thoroughfare, is small and the congregation was not large, consisting of, I should say, not more than a hundred and fifty people. The organ which was to be re-opened was a modest one, and perhaps like other lowly people felt troubled at the ceremony lavished on it. The preacher once referred to the "little organ," and there was a trace of apology as well as a touch of tenderness in his tone. However it is with the preacher more than the organ with whom we are just now concerned. In my youth I heard Canon Body who was regarded as a "ritualist" capable of preaching an eloquent evangelistic sermon; now he begins to look aged but is fresh and vigorous, and I was glad to hear him again. A certain Bishop once said to his Suffragan, regarding appeals that would be made for his services, "They will ask you to open churches and chapels; they will ask you to open vestries; they will ask you to open windows and they will ask you to open umbrellas." I do not remember that he said anything about opening organs, but I can certainly say that Canon Body opened, or rather re-opened, the little organ in a manner worthy of a bishop.

Now for the sermon, which besides being appropriate was delivered with considerable force marked at times by evangelical fervour, and rose at times into real eloquence. The text was Psalm 150, which had already been sung, the subject, instrumental music in the church, with special reference to the organ. In these days of controversy we are all, Churchmen, Roman Catholics and Conformists, agreed that it is right and expedient to us: instrumental music in the service of the church. When the preacher had made this statement it seemed as if there was nothing more to be said; but herein was seen the preacher's rhetorical art, as he immediately proceeded to show that the problem was not quite so easy. For centuries instrumental music was not found in the services of the Christian Church, it is not mentioned in the Acts, and there are many converging lines of proof to show that it was unknown for a very long time. In the East, that is in the Greek Church, it is not accepted yet, and it was not generally accepted in the West until

the thirteenth century. Thomas Aquinas said it was not admitted lest the church should seem to Judaize. And in the remote districts of Scotland there is still a strong antipathy among pious people. Jenny Geddes, so the preacher said, showed her hatred in a vigorous manner to "the Kist o' Whistles." Hence we must remember, (1) that the use of instrumental music is not ancient, (2) the conservatism in this matter of the Eastern Church, (3) the strong feeling of devout Scottish people. But on the other side it must be borne in mind that the early church had to keep clear of all art; it had no painting or sculpture, the reason being that these noble things were in the control of pagans and had been in many ways degraded. In themselves, however, they are not wrong. A thing of real beauty is also a manifestation of truth. Ultramontanist, which is a form of error, develops ugly art. God rejoices in all embodiments of truth; the art which we use in his service must express a part of his truth. When the Church has conquered paganism it could go back to the example of the ancient Church. In Solomon's temple, where music was used, the glory of the Lord filled the house. Then they say we must go back also to the bleeding sacrifices. No! because all the truth that centres round them is gathered up in the true, eternal sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

But music may still form a part of a true, intelligent worship. Let us then learn lessons from the organ, and from the present season. How did the disciples spend the days between Easter and Whitsuntide or Pentecost? In praying, hoping for, and expecting the Holy Ghost. On that depended their power to live the new Christian life. We may take then the organ as a parable of this life. (1) The organ is not one player but many, each stop gives a different kind of music and these different tones are brought together in wonderful harmony. (2) The organ needs the touch of the master hand; it is only an instrument, it has no power to guide or control itself. (3) But with the best organ and the most skillful musician there is silence until the wind, the breath of God is poured into it, then it is quickened out of the dumbness of its death into the music of its exaltation.

The organ after all is a thing of time, it suffers from change, gets out of tune, and needs to be retuned. I am like the organ, a combination of various powers, I must have clear intelligence, fervent enthusiasm, and consistent action. Free confession must become practice, creed must be turned into character. I cannot draw this music from myself, I need the touch of Jesus Christ. He is the great master musician, guiding all my powers into harmony. Many are not responsive to his gentle touch; they can only be made so by the inbreathing of the Holy Spirit. Christ uses the influences of prayer, the Word, the Sanctuary and the Sabbaths. Through these His hand touches us; but the Spirit must be within making them effective. Then we have the inward intensity, the living will, and true Christian service. Thus our lives are tuned to the will of God, and prepared for the celestial music. Thus the preacher unfolded for the benefit of his hearers the parable of the organ.

Riches.

Oh, what is earth, that we should build
Our houses here, and seek concealed
Poor treasures, and add field to field,
And heap to heap, and store to store,—
Still grasping and still seeking more,
While step by step Death nears the door?
—Christina Rossetti.

A Shorter and Simpler Creed.

BY REV. W. T. HERRIDGE, D. D.

On a recent Sunday the minister of St. Andrew's Church preached a sermon which has attracted a good deal of attention. He suggested a simpler creed for the Presbyterian church. We reproduce his closing sentences:

"This is not pre-eminently a creed-making age. And yet we must have a creed of some sort. For my own part I could get along with this one which fell from the lips of the Master Himself: God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life." Every essential doctrine of Christianity seems to me to be contained or implied in it; the doctrine of God's love, of man's guilt, of Christ's Divine power, of salvation through faith in Him, of a life which reaches beyond the grave, and which nothing can ever destroy. And when Presbyterianism is accused of being narrow, as it sometimes is by those who do not know it, I wish to say with emphasis that no church in Christendom is broader in its tests for membership. It is true that its ministers and elders are asked to give a general assent to the system of doctrine set forth in the Westminster Confession. If anyone understands it to teach that certain helpless infants are damned from all eternity, I suppose he may teach that horrible falsehood, but I never heard of anyone doing so. He may deal with election as a mysterious problem of Divine caprice rather than as a palpable fact, which the free will of man perpetually demonstrates, but he does this on his own responsibility. In my humble judgment it would be wise to remove all doubt as to what our church teaches by such a re-statement of the whole question as made it clear that the love of God is never partial nor arbitrary. I do not think that either the piety or the orthodoxy of the church would be injured by a less elaborate and technical creed than that of the Westminster divines, and one which revolved round the great central fact that the compassion of the Father in heaven is infinite, and that it covers all men.

"But while I hope to live to see the day when a simpler standard of faith will be held sufficient for those who preach the gospel in Presbyterian pulpits, it must be remembered that as concerns church membership, faith in Christ and obedience to Him is all that is required of anyone. Within these bounds there is room left for wide divergence of individual opinion. No church could ask less without ceasing to be a church, and it has always seemed to me that no church has any right to ask more. The Presbyterian fold is open to anyone who wants to make the essentially Christian type of life his own, and a reasonable measure of freedom is accorded him in interpreting and illustrating what is meant by it. Our backbone may be Scotch, a hard backbone it seems to some, perhaps, yet unquestionably a strong one. But our limbs and features are broadly human, and nobody is shut out from fellowship with us if he believes in our common Master, and is resolved to follow Him.

"While creed therefore, is of some consequence it is not everything. The church could make no more serious mistake than to identify theology with Christianity. Of course, when God gave us brain, He intended us to use them. The neglect of intellectual culture is itself a minor immorality. And there are no theses which give such an insistent challenge to the exercise of our mental powers as those connected