

ON Trinity Sunday the Metropolitan of Cape-town, acting by letters dimissory from the Bishop of St. John's, admitted H. Mdeleeni, a Fingo catechist, to the diaconate. He is thus the first clergyman in South Africa of pure native descent.

THE other Sunday night the Bishop of Manchester preached in his cathedral to a crowded congregation, on "The Enemies of Christianity," and he said in his sermon: "Organized systems that opposed the Christian belief, though they might be formidable, could be seen and grappled with, and thrown; but if religion be attacked by vague, formless, and popular indifference, infidelity and discontent, it was exceedingly difficult to know with what they were fighting, to see their enemy and lay hold upon him, for he was a formless monster almost like that 'fearful shape that shape had none,' which, in Milton's great poem, opposed the escape of Satan from hell." How are ministers to contend with indifference? And if the preacher lacks wise zeal, what is to be the result?

SPEAKING at a garden party given by the Bishop of London and Mrs. Temple to the members of the London Diocesan Church Reading Union, the Dean of St. Paul's directed attention to the importance of the study of Church history as sure to furnish arguments in favour of the Catholicity and the antiquity of the Church of England. He pointed out the great advantage that was taken by Roman Catholic controversialists of ignorance on these points, and observed that history taught us that, if there were anomalies in the development of our Church, they were not different from those exhibited in other branches of the Church. The Dean warned members of the union of the danger of taking up a subject of this kind and then dropping it, and dwelt on the importance of patient and persistent reading. A society like the Reading Union would give the help and encouragement of common action.

THE PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH MUSIC.

A SERMON PREACHED BY THE VEN. ARCHDEACON SINCLAIR AT THE LONDON CHURCH CHOIR ASSOCIATION NINETEENTH ANNUAL FESTIVAL.

(Concluded.)

My brothers, the principles which are special to parish choirs are *simplicity*, *unselfishness* and *modesty*, or the *absence of ambition*.

With regard to *Simplicity*, the greater part of the music should be such as in it even the humblest can join. The tunes of the hymns and chants should be well-known and familiar, and all within the compass of average voices. They must not aim at the elaborateness of the cathedral choir, because their function is different. The function of the cathedral, except at the specially popular services, is to be a school of Church music, in which the most cultivated can, from time to time, be moved, aroused, and delighted. The function of the parish church is to persuade all to sing. The old fashion which placed the organ at the west end of the Church was in this respect a help, because it gave support and encouragement to the congregation. An occasional anthem is an encouragement to the choir, and has a charm for even unlettered

people, if the words have been previously read to them, and they know what it is about. But the parish choir has no time at its disposal for practice and perfection comparable to that which is available for the cathedral; and a bad anthem is a very bad thing indeed—so bad that it only excites pity, contempt, and ridicule, and a strong desire for its absence. It is felt to be a blot on the service.

Connected with this principle of *simplicity* is softness. There are very few parish choirs that do not sing too loud. They do not reflect that the same body of voice which might sound heavenly and peaceful in St. Paul's Cathedral, would have an appalling and deafening effect in a smaller Church. In the hymns, certainly, a good body of voice is needed; but in hardly any other part of the service is loudness on the part of the choir anything else but a distraction and a nuisance. The distinctness of which I spoke has nothing whatever to do with loudness. The tendency to loudness is almost a universal failing; it is no doubt a protection, though but a poor one, against flatness; but it would be well if the trouble spent on elaborateness were directed to the cultivation of precision of tone and a self-relying softness. It would be well if all choirs could study the exquisite effect of the hushed stillness and whispered solemnity of the beautiful choir of the Temple Church.

The next point is *Unselfishness*. The temptation common to most choirs is to think more of their own wishes, skill, and progress, than of the good of God's people. Unselfishness is a grace earnestly to be prayed for by choir-master, organist, and singers. With the exception of the occasional anthem, which we have mentioned, and of special services on week-days for oratorios, where none need come who are not musical, it is of the very utmost importance that in all parish churches the majority of the music should be such as all the people can share and understand. The main recommendation which Gregorian chants have is, that when once the people get hold of them they sing them with heart and soul. The extraordinary effect should never be forgotten of the unison singing at the great Tabernacle of South London, and of the well-known Church of St. James, Holloway, in the north. There is the help of neither organ nor choir, but the people undertake all the music themselves, and sing like the sound of many waters, with all the magic sympathy of innumerable hearts united in earnestness. That need not be our ideal; but in no single Church ought the organist and choir either to ignore the congregation altogether, or to treat them as a nuisance. I would even go so far as to say that in every group of five or six churches there should be always one with a plain, old-fashioned service for those who are not musical, and who now sometimes seek in vain for a place where they can worship God in their own way. And in all churches, if the congregation are to join in as we all so earnestly wish, the choir and organist must not object to their being slow. The majestic style of the German chorale is far more encouraging to congregational music, as you yourselves have heard in the grand processional hymns of this evening, than the light, crisp, quick notes of much of our modern hymnody. You cannot expect people to join in sacred glees without much practice.

Lastly, there is the principle of *Modesty*, or the absence of ambition. The churches which can afford to have practised and skilful singers can adventure more than those that are in humbler circumstances, and are likely to be attended by congregations to whom more scientific music is intelligible and devotional. But the majority are not in this position, and it is much to be deplored if there should be a feeling that there can be but one fashion for all alike. If the clergy cannot intone well, it is infinitely preferable that they should read rather than that they should intone badly. If the choir do not sing the responses, it is infinitely preferable that the responding should be left to the congregation, rather than that there should be a thin, poor, and rough monotonous on the part of those who have not the skill, or experience, to make their utterance musical and devotional. Ambition is the besetting sin of more than half our choirs; and a badly performed ambitious service, far from being an attractive influence, is a decided and absolute repulsion.

My brothers, deep is the gratitude we owe to our choirs, for all the trouble and earnestness which they take on our behalf. Wonderful is the progress which the music in our churches has made during the last half century, in consonance with the general advance in taste and education. True and real is the help which they give to our devotions. Inextinguishable is the obligation which we feel to the great masters of modern church melodies, and to the poets whose hymns purify our thoughts, interpret our emotions, and rouse our best aspirations. Invaluable are such occasions as this, when the choirs are trained by the most experienced minds, in the purest taste, and learn the majesty of concentrated praise. To carry on the work of the association, your generous sympathy and alms are asked. And may God, around whose glory the eternal melodies are ever echoing, grant to each of us, whether we are leaders or sharers in His Divine gift of music, whenever we meet before His invisible and omnipresent throne, to take in new draughts of spiritual life, because we have sought Him with a true service!

THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN ENGLAND.

(IRISH ECCLESIASTICAL GAZETTE.)

The hour has come when we may take breath and look calmly at the situation. The first excitement and turmoil of the general election is over, and we can survey the position with a certain amount of equanimity, and even courage. The result is not as we would have had it to be, or hoped it would be, but, on the other hand, it is not so bad as some of us feared. Mr. Gladstone has indeed got a majority on all issues of 42, where beyond question his followers fondly believed in a majority of three figures. This is one element of comfort, but when we go on to examine into some of the particulars of this dilapidated majority, we find further elements to give us hope and courage. Mr. Gladstone has indeed spoken with apparent bravery of the wonderful things a smaller majority has done in party warfare; but he did not care to remind his hearers that it was in these cases a homogeneous majority, and a majority that had already stood the test of great tension. The