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ARCHDEACON HESSEY'S PRIMARY CHARGE.

We incline to think that our business as journalists is not so much to find fault as to commend; and we are very strongly of opinion that the interests of the Church are better promoted by pointing out examples for imitation, and referring to principles for general adoption, rather than by cavilling at what may not quite agree with our notions. We wish to lead our people to love their Church, to admire her excellencies, and not to devote all their attention to any unseemly excrescences that may have attached themselves to her organization. In accordance with this principle, which we hope we shall always bear in mind, we would draw attention to the primary charge of Dr. Hessey, Archdeacon of Middlesex—recently delivered.

The chief business of an Archdeacon has usually been understood to be to deal with the temporalities of the Church; especially in large Dioceses, other duties more directly of a spiritual nature, and sometimes of a semi-episcopal character, would necessarily devolve upon them. And so it comes to pass that the charge or address, periodically delivered by an Archdeacon, is sometimes of a purely business nature, dealing entirely with temporalities; while at other times, when great questions are agitated, and there is an evident demand, or it may be, an opportunity for dilating on matters of more general interest, subjects not so entirely local receive their due share of attention.

The Archdeacon of Middlesex has given us some admirable sentiments in his charge lately delivered; but as they are evidently of no party character, they will perhaps be very generally overlooked.

In advocating toleration in things that may have had a great fuss and disturbance made about them, although in reality, they may involve no important principle, he remarks that no man was less worldly than St. Paul; and yet, he asks, what was his advice about circumcision, meats offered to idols, and the observance of Jewish holy days? These things might easily have been understood to involve principles of the most important and fundamental character, and forming the very essence of Christianity; and yet when not directly made to bear upon essential principles, he directs that they may be used or not, according to the inclination of the individual Christian; and he even practices circumcision himself on a very particular occasion. The Archdeacon illustrates his ideas of different modes of expressing the same truths, and of the various degrees of importance that may be attached to their several branches, by an incident which happened some time ago. He had an opportunity of visiting a school of art, where a number of pupils were

engaged copying the model of a cathedral. They were all good draughtsmen, and the professor testified to the correctness of their perspective; and yet no two of their drawings were alike. In one, the chancel or choir was most prominent; in another, the spire; in another, the nave concealed the chancel altogether; in another, the whole building was seen, although with deep shadows from the projections. The reason of this, of course, was because no two of them could, from their different places, nearer or farther off, in the front or on either side, on the floor or in a gallery against the walls of the room, obtain the same view. Each took the cathedral from his own position, and transferred his expression of that aspect of it to his own drawing. And yet there was similarity enough, in the most differing representations, to show that the object copied must have been the same in each case.

The Archdeacon, applying this incident to the various religious questions of the day, points out that one man may have a strong conviction of the greatness and importance of Baptismal grace; another may be impressed with a fear of indolently reposing on that grace; one may have a feeling of the importance of laying hold on Christ by faith; another with the necessity of evidencing his Christianity in his life; and so on. He then quotes a paragraph from "one of the ablest of the Evangelical school"; and as the sentiments it embodies are so valuable and are so remarkably and unusually moderate, we cannot refrain from giving it in his own words:—

"There is, I believe no surer way of promoting abuses than denying or ignoring the truths and excellencies that underlie them. Error, it must always be remembered, is almost always the exaggeration of some truth. Superstition itself, even in its grossest forms, is the excess of fear or zeal in matters of religion. The fault is not attention to religion, but attention to it in a wrong way. And the person who is most likely to arrive at a just conclusion is the one who has a mind large enough to discover where the gem of truth lies, and in what consists the error, which has grown as an incrustation around it. It is the opposite course which has frequently been productive of much harm. Men are easily driven from one extreme to another. There is a notable instance of this, in the fact that many of those who have of late adopted the practices of Rome were originally brought up in a totally different school of thought. They have been urged in this direction by many culpable neglects which they have observed; such as irreverence in worship, depreciation of the sacraments, and the undervaluing of due order and discipline. I do not deny that there may be a love of ornamental service where there is no true love of Christ, and that outward ceremonies may be mere mocking substitutes for spiritual realities; yet, on the other hand, a very

plain service may be an equally dead thing; and the man who plumes himself on being 'no Ritualist' may, nevertheless, be 'no worshipper.'"

Such wise and large-hearted sentiments form the very essence of the peace and prosperity of the Church; and, as a contemporary very justly remarks, if most churchmen would only act in this spirit, the most vexatious questions of the day would soon be disposed of; and although there will always be men given to extremes, yet they would create but little difficulty.

PASTORAL WORK.

We are under no little obligation to Canon Liddon for the letter he has written to the Rev. J. Ingle on the Union of Benefices Bill. The subject involves the question as to what is the main work of the ministers of the Gospel, and he says:—"Proposals like that before Parliament appear to ignore the serious truth, that the real work of the ministers of Christ lies in building up the Christian life in single souls; surely, under any circumstances, a very difficult work, and more easily to be carried out in a small parish than in a large one. Instead of this, the modern ideal is that of a very diluted 'influence for good,' of some kind, exerted, through public addresses and similar means, over large masses of people. This ideal is really, as I believe, a social rather than a properly religious one; but it is in harmony with the temper, and it satisfies the public conscience of our age. Surely a small city parish, into the work of which a clergyman throws his whole mind and heart, might become a focus of intense Christian life, from which it should radiate into surrounding and less favored districts! The destruction of such parishes involves a forfeiture of the opportunity of doing spiritual work in the most thorough way. It is a step in the direction towards which we have been, and are moving more quickly than those of us would wish who believe Christianity to be something more than a vague influence for social good."

It could hardly have been supposed that the announcement of the principle of the necessity of direct and individual intercourse between the clergyman and the members of his flock would be so necessary, and that our obligation to Canon Liddon in bringing it forward would be so great, were it not for the fact that the substance of his letter has been so much cavilled at and found fault with. Surely the most popular preacher of the whole Anglican Communion, and the best now living in the world, could very well afford to institute a comparison between the sudden transitory appeal to the feelings and the consciences of large masses, and the building up of the Christian life in single souls. In his case, he might have been expected to do anything rather than underrate the effect of the public