

from sending an excuse when asked to support the Rev. Canon Ottley, and with him to enter into a discussion with the Rev. Mr. Short, the Baptist minister of Salisbury, and the Rev. Mr. Collier, the Baptist minister for many years resident in my mother-parish of Downton. I had no misgiving as to the true Christian brotherly love I should meet from these; the latter, during many years of intercourse, had always shown himself a true Christian gentleman. With the other I had conducted the long negotiations for our meetings at Salisbury, in all of which the examples of Christian love which I had endeavoured to act upon had been thoroughly reciprocated. But I confess I had some fears as to the general wisdom of the proceeding and as to the Christian conduct of the large numbers brought together to hear our discussion, with the privilege to four others on each side from the body of the meeting to join in it.

The quiet attention of the great gathering led me away into too long and extempore introduction, which gave me little time to complete my paper, and without being able to do so I was allowed greatly to exceed the allotted time, with the greatest courtesy on the part of the Baptist ministers and forbearance on the part of people. The tone of the discussion as conducted by the leaders was everything that could be desired, and when two energetic young ministers attempted to transgress rules by political or partisan remarks, they were immediately called to order by their own leaders.

The Baptist ministers did not attempt to grapple with all the arguments of my address but appealed to 'the word and the testimony,' standing up for immersion without exception, and for the necessity of repentance and faith, which, they affirmed, children could not have, and therefore against their admission, since it was nowhere ordered in Scripture that they should be baptised. Our answer that immersion was the rule of the Church, to which we claimed the liberty to make exception, and by the analogy of circumcision, and the fact that children of converts from heathendom were baptised by the Jews, and that, therefore, we must look for a command against infant baptism, if it was not to be, instead of a command for it, was also pressed home, and it was further urged that Baptism was not complete till Confirmation, 'Bishop baptism' (as it is called in Wales), had been given.

As many of us at the meeting carefully thought over the discussion, it did appear as if the clouds were opening, the Baptists allowing that their children were considered members of their body requiring instruction, and further allowing that very young children might show repentance and faith, compared on the other side with our completed course of infant baptism, subsequent instruction and confirmation, bringing with it the fuller gifts of the Holy Ghost; there seemed to be some chance of reconciliation.

The meeting was brought to a close without any vote, but by motions of thanks to the speakers, and the noblest exhortations to peace on the part of the Baptist ministers that their teachers should not make this the beginning of strife in the place. In a report as to the good done by the meeting in the place, I heard that Churchmen did become more energetic in maintaining the Church's teaching, and that some of the Wesleyans declared they had never so fully realised the importance of infant baptism before.

The good Christian feeling exhibited at the meeting was much disturbed by a correspondence in the newspapers, begun in a different tone by an anonymous Churchman. To save the good impression that the conduct of the meeting had created, I ventured to write in the old spirit of love, which at once re-awakened the same kindly spirit among the Baptists in reply. The opinions expressed at Bower Chalke, and in the subsequent correspondence, have, however, convinced me that I had taken a wrong view of Baptist teaching at the present time. I had always supposed that for adults coming in faith and repentance to Holy Baptism, the Baptist would have claimed all those special blessings which the Church attaches to that holy ordinance, and also that Baptists would have allowed that all such baptism was a necessary condition of admission into the Church or kingdom of God.

I am sorry thus to lose two points of hoped-for unity; but it is not so with all, for another Baptist minister, in answer to a letter of mine in a subsequent correspondence, writes to me as follows:—

"The latter part of your letter is very pleasant to me. Your position respecting baptism as the entrance into the Christian religion, and as necessary before Communion, and also as communicating a certain grace, ought to have elicited from Baptists their most hearty concurrence. But, alas! they have degenerated, and as your Lordship well says, such lay teaching can have no other logical outcome than the dispensing with baptism altogether."—*Church Bells*.

THE USE OF A PARISH.

THING is worth just what can be got out of it. It is well to keep that in mind.

What is the use of a Parish? It may strike some of us as a rather strange question. We have never thought whether the Parish needed to be of an use. It seemed to us its own sufficient apology, its own sufficient excuse for being.

Will this quite answer, however, when we come to consider? As a matter of fact, we do think this is usually the view taken. And we honestly confess we believe there are a thousand dead Parishes in consequence. People, without thinking, quietly assume that the Parish—the congregation, the church, or whatever it may be called—is its own sufficient purpose and end. It exists for itself. It completes itself in itself. And when we ask, "What is the use of a Parish?" they would answer, "Its use is to be a Parish—that is all."

Now we do not think this can be accepted. The Parish is not an end, but a means. It was organized to do something. And its value depends entirely on the extent to which it does that something well.

To preach the Gospel, to save the souls of men, to extend the kingdom of Christ—this is what the Parish exists for. To build up believers; to gather in unbelievers; to bring men to faith and repentance, to baptism and confirmation, and holy communion; to set people about good works—caring for the poor, the outcast, the sick and sorrowful; to set men working and giving for Christ's sake and man's—this is the purpose of the Parish, as it is of the Church and Ministry, and all the means of grace.

The extent to which a Parish does this sort of business in the world, is the measure of the value of that Parish. The Parish that does not do it at all is of no value whatsoever. It, assuredly, is not such a lovely sight that it is its own beautiful excuse!

A Parish does not exist that a certain number of people may enjoy "eloquent preaching" or "artistic singing," or that they may have a beautiful church in which to worship, or cushioned pews in which to dispose themselves. If these things are the ends for which Parishes exist, we must confess they are hardly worth the trouble of organizing or sustaining. And it is just because these things are taken to be ends—because so many good people feel that, having all these, the Parish is complete and its purpose reached—that so many of our parishes are so utterly useless, cumberers of the ground, and shames to the Church whose name they bear.

How many sinners are brought to repentance and better minds? How many unbelievers are trained for holy baptism? How many children are instructed for confirmation? How many outcasts are gathered into the fold? How many poor and destitute are cared for, warmed and filled? How bravely is the battle fought for the Lord Jesus against the world and the devil? How much does the Parish do, and how many dollars does the Parish give away? These are the questions which will test the value of the use, good friends who read this, of St. Paul's, or St. John's, or St. James' parish, of which you are, perhaps, (we trust so!) justly proud.

The sad thought is, that St. Paul's, St. John's, or the rest, may be very "prosperous," very "strong," very "large" Parishes, able to command "the first talent" both in pulpit and organ loft, and very well satisfied with themselves, without being able to give any answer at all to such questions, and, alas! without any idea, often, that such questions are not utterly impertinent and absurd!

If you belong to any such Parish, good reader, do set yourself thinking. For, positively, your Parish may be, according to its own measure, a very fine Parish indeed, when really is not worth house room in the Church or Diocese.—*Church Journal*.

A MISSIONER'S WORK.

REV. J. W. Bonham, the "missioner" of the Church of England who has been working in various localities for some time, has attracted a great deal of attention by the zeal of his endeavours and their novelty. Mr. Bonham talks very frankly about his work and its results. During the course of a conversation with Mr. Bonham yesterday the following occurred:—

"Why are Church Evangelists called 'Missioners'?"

"As a man who paints is called a 'painter.'"

"Are not the special services Missioners conduct in the Episcopal Church a novelty?"

The name is modern, but the specific object is ancient. Missioners are ordinary clergymen who do an extraordinary work. The extraordinary Missioner is the Archbishop of York, who sometimes preaches over twenty times in a single week, and holds extraordinary services in sail lofts, factories, and in any

place where sinners can be convened to hear that Christ died to save them."

"What led to this mode of Church work?"

"Indirectly, what was termed 'The Oxford Movement,' and the stir made by the 'Tracts for the Times.' For a season the preaching part of God's means of grace was much disparaged, and the celebration of the Holy Communion was emphasized as the highest act of visible worship. But as converts to Christ were not made by beholding the ritual of worship, and existing worshippers are mortal, to prevent parish extinction by having the places of the departed filled, attention was aroused to the importance of Christ's command, 'Preach the Gospel.' While the Church slumbered after the homœopathic principle of the smallest sweet morsels concealed in the sermonettes to mature communicants, preaching on the importance of growth in grace made no impression on those who had no grace."

"Are Missions in conflict with what is termed 'The Parish System'?"

"Being supplementary and not substitutionary they are not in conflict but in harmony. In many instances they have prevented parish extinction. Missioners only melt what Rector's afterwards mould and nurture; and Rectors and Missioners work together in perfect harmony."

"Did not parochial missions have a sudden origin?"

"The twelve days' mission held in sixty of the largest London churches, and the crowds who could not find standing room excited sudden wonder. Also the ten days' mission held simultaneously in about 250 of the largest London churches. But this was a grand crisis of the Gospel work that year before was commenced so quietly and continues so efficiently; and illustrated what a spreading flame of holy fervour the few glimmering sparks of zeal to save the lost had enkindled. And the Bishops and Archbishops had no desire to extinguish it, nor to drive the missioners outside the Church to find a sphere for their zeal and fervour as in the time of the Wesleys."

"Is the great interest in Missions conferred to Churchmen of a particular school of thought?"

"Clergymen called 'Low' cry the loudest concerning the great importance of preaching the Gospel to save the lost. Clergymen called 'High' stoop the lowest to do so and raise the fallen. Clergymen termed 'Broad' emphasize God's promises, but thunder not His threatenings; and while 'High' and 'Low' preach eternal fruition to whosoever believeth, the Westminster Abbey Broad Church trumpet proclaim 'Eternal Hope' to him who believeth not! But in places where a simultaneous Mission is in progress the terms 'High' and 'Low' and 'Broad' are not heard. Co-operation is hearty, and all strike the same key-note on the grand gospel organ, and sing with increasing swell the 'Gloria,' including the Dean of St. Paul's and the Dean of Westminster Abbey; Canons Liddon and Gregory, Father Benson, George Body and Knox Little; Haslam, Melville Pym and the fervent Artken."

"How do you account for the extraordinary results accompanying Missions?"

"The Gospel is preached with concentrated force, and without long intervals, and before one impression on the mind has died away another is added. The successive impressions facilitate the will to decide and say with the Prodigal, 'I will arise and go to my father.' A mission therefore is not a new 'means of grace but an intensification of the old.'"

"Do all rectors welcome the aid of missioners?"

"A few prefer the Church's usual quiet ways, and would sing from Advent to Advent."

"All is tranquil and serene, Calm and undisturbed repose."

But a large number desire in no way to oppose the work. And the number of ministers is fast decreasing who in word or action say, "If the people in my parish limits will not be saved under my personal and ordinary ministry let them perish!"

"Do the large numbers confirmed as the result of missions, continue steadfast, or in popular phrase, 'hold out'?"

"Those benefitted at missions are not left to themselves because they 'feel happy,' but are instructed in Bible classes, in confirmation classes and led by the Rector's hand. According to the testimony of the Bishop elect of Truro, Cornwall, as a rule the converts continue steadfast, and show their faith by good works, and those who have died departed in serenity and triumph."

"Are Missions needed in the Episcopal Church in America?"

"Needed! The Bishop of central New York, and other American Bishops admit that the spiritual apathy in some parishes is fearful to contemplate. Fashion is overlaying devotion with a handsome and impious display. Levity and self-indulgence are est-

ing out the difference of ideas or dogma."

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