

ness' in it, which in the nineteen out of twenty pulpits does duty for the sermon?

The sermon, rightly regarded, is a great opportunity. The people do still, spite of the poor catering, like to hear a good sermon. They (the majority of them) feel cheated out of their due if there is no sermon, or one which is merely the result of the necessity to 'say something,' instead of being the outcome of something which the heart has to say. And this it is which makes knowledge, in the week, of the flock of so much value, for the giving point and interest to the sermon—making it *practical*, bringing it to bear on the needs and temptations and casuistry of everyday life. Honesty in a railway journey, pleasantness in the house, diligence in the schoolroom, system in the religious life, &c., &c., suggestions for thought; answer, it may often be, to unasked questions: words for awakening and words for building up; food for the flock. For the poet is right in calling them the *hungry* sheep. There is in every heart of God-created man,

"An aching void  
The world can never fill."

And, for the prodigal, after the world's banquet, a *great* *Famine*, which mere husks of food will never satisfy. And an earnest, well-thought-out, practical, and under-the-surface sermon, will come in at a time of need, of which, it may be, the preacher knew nothing and will compel attention from hearts, once indifferent, but that fear, or joy, or pain, has made attentive and receptive now.

A sermon may (and should) be *interesting*, yet not flippant; simple, yet not shallow. The man who cannot himself write a sermon has at command rich stores of the work of those who can do so, and have done so. He may put deep thought into plain words—his own words, as a rule, although (with an 'as has been said' or the like) he may quote whole telling passages of earnest exhortation. 'Let no man despise thy youth' was St. Paul's exhortation to a young man, and he would not give a charge which could not be carried out. And even men—even elderly and educated men—would not disdain to listen to a young man, who, leaving mere platitudes, had wrought out and enlisted into his service profound and practical thoughts, expressed in unaffected and dignified language. There is really so much *material* to hand for those who are *self-distrustful*,—if such there be.

Many have heard the reply of Bishop Blomfield to a just-ordained man who asked, 'Whether a curate ought at first to write his own sermons?' 'Certainly,' the Bishop replied; 'and, for seven years, to preach somebody else's!'

There is much good sense in this advice. It is hard for a congregation of grown and intellectual men and women to be for a year or so the subjects of an apprentice hand. Then the young curate goes elsewhere, and another, with the shell on his head, begins the same annoying process. If he drew from ripe men their stores, and built, if not yet skilfully, yet with sound materials, he would win respect and gain attention. Let each, gentle and simple, have something to carry away with him, some thought or application new, or, if not new, strikingly put so as to seem so. A full Church and a congregation ready (if it be made worth while) to listen—is this a chance to be lightly regarded and thrown away? Let some other part of necessary or desirable parish work be made to give place, rather than that the time and study, required for sufficient sermon preparation, be crowded out of the 'Pastor's' life.—*I. R. V. in Church Bells.*

#### AN IRISH BISHOP ON CHRISTIAN CONVENTIONS.

At the present moment, when the Irish Church is so strongly asserting itself and putting forth a fresh and vigorous life, it may be

well to reproduce the energetic language of the Bishop of Cork, as he deals with the recurring efforts made in Dublin to sink the individuality of the Church in dissent. In no other portion of the vineyard is a like attempt made from time to time to compromise the position of the Church. The Right Rev. Dr. Gregg was addressing the opening meeting of the 1886-7 Session of the Theological Society of the University of Dublin, and this is what he says:

"I am sorry that in this respect I cannot altogether agree with what the Auditor has said; and I do not think it would be worthy of me if I were to stand here upon the invitation of this Society and not really say what I think of this most important matter. I have no desire to hurt the feelings of anyone, yet I think it is our place here to state what we really think on this subject. I ask myself what is the object of these Conventions, as they are called? Is it for the purpose of having serious discussion on any important subject? No; that seems altogether to be avoided. I doubt if such assemblies could bear the strain of a serious discussion. Is it for any object of practical philanthropy or benevolence? No; the Conventions seem to stop short of that. They do not attempt anything of that kind. What, then, is the object? It is evidently for the purpose of worship and of mutual exhortation; very good purposes these are, no doubt. But is not this true? If a number of men meet together for worship and mutual exhortation, I think it is quite plain that in order to do so with profit they must be agreed upon some of the great principles and practices of the Christian faith. Now, when men meet together in a convention are they so agreed? Are they agreed with regard to the Sacraments of the Church? As far as I remember, I never heard a discussion—I never heard of a discussion, for I never attended such meetings—I have never heard of any allusion to the Sacraments in the meetings of the conventions which have been held. And, further again, there is another great principle which always seems to me to be passed over in silence—not a question as to whether there is but one order of the ministry, or three orders of the ministry; but the question of whether a *ministry at all* is a necessary part of the machinery of the Christian Church. I cannot see that when such a body meets for worship and exhortation, and ends in no object of practical philanthropy or benevolence, and when the members of such bodies are not agreed on these three great facts, and practices, and doctrines, I cannot see that it is likely to result in much good. I should fear rather lest it should tend to beget in the minds of men a less clear comprehension of some of those great doctrines and principles, and a less firm hold of some of the important articles of the Christian faith; nay rather, it seems to me that the following out of some object of practical benevolence is the true hope of union for the distracted and divided Church of God."

We ourselves have no doubt of the mischief wrought to the Church, and especially to her orders, by this patching up of a temporary truce. The reformed Irish Church is planted in this land for Christ; she opens her arms to receive all within her embrace, but she should not sacrifice her position for the sake of an apparent, but really deceitful alliance for the time with those who do not believe in her orders, nor accept her doctrines. We observe that the Church of England (?) Parochial Missions Society is likewise doing what it can to advance the cause of dissent in Dublin, and has organized a series of so-called "united services" in the Christian Union Buildings, on Sunday as well as week-days for next month, so that for some time to come our weaker brethren in Dublin will be subject to a wave of dissenting influence; the Christian Union Buildings well

be full, the parish Churches in the neighborhood empty.—*Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette.*

#### SOCIAL INTERCOURSE AMONG CHURCH PEOPLE.

BY MR. STANLEY LEIGHTON, M.P.

There appear to be many Churchpeople who almost pride themselves upon knowing no difference between those who *do* and those who *do not* belong to their own communion. The Roman Catholics, the Methodists, the Jews, and indeed the Nonconformists generally, show us an example in this respect. They all make a marked difference between their fellow worshippers and the outside world beyond. They are careful in acknowledging a spiritual relationship, which bears ample fruit in society, in business, and even sometimes in politics. *Churchmen should hold more together.* I am quite sure that the kindness which comes from the feeling that a person has a claim upon one's sympathy on religious grounds savours not of intolerance, but charity. Between the various classes and gradations of a complex society like our own there is inevitable want of acquaintance and understanding; there are rivalries and divisions and antagonisms. Religious fellowship, linked with social intercourse, is a healer of such differences. In the country, quite as much as in the towns, the need is felt; and in the great centres of population immense efforts are being made to meet the necessities of the case. I sometimes begin to fear that the squire, and the farmer, and the shopkeeper of the small town, will become isolated from the mass of the population living around them, and not united amongst themselves. What a broad, what a tolerant, what a sympathetic bond *Churchmanship* affords for the intercommunion of *all classes* on a common and equal basis. The manifold works undertaken in direct connection with the Church are opportunities for Churchpeople to work together. But this must be remembered, the workers in each department, or the workers in all united, should meet at least once a year, if not oftener, for the purpose of social entertainment; they should eat and drink together; they should make personal acquaintance with each other, they should feel that they are friends. In country parishes, or in thinly populated districts, the members of the congregation should meet together, and have annual foregathering amongst themselves. The perfect equality and brotherly fellowship of the parish Church should not be confined to the *inside* of the material fabric, but should be a *pervading principle*, expressed by outward and visible signs; and the time has come when the members of the same congregation should be ready to show the *reality* of their religious professions by a close and intimate association with all who worship in the same Church and kneel at the same altar.

A subscriber in Toronto, writes:

"In renewing my subscription for the CHURCH GUARDIAN, I have much pleasure in saying, that I am more than pleased with it. You take a direct course, being clear and decided in your Church teaching without abusing others, carrying out, I think, the spirit of the two texts (Eph. vi, 24, Jude 3) which you have adopted as your Motto.

Wishing you success.

If a Church waits until it has paid its debts and makes both ends meet, and filled its pews before it begins to work for Christ, it will never begin that work.