

DEDICATION OF NEW LYCH GATE AND CONFIRMATION AT BOLSTERSTONE.

On Friday, 11th March, the Right Reverend the Bishop of Beverley, who came for the purpose of holding a Confirmation in the Parish Church, kindly dedicated the new Lych Gate which has been erected to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee. The Bishop, attended by the choir and the clergy, came from the vestry, and walking round the east end of the Church halted before the Lych Gate. The Bishop then stood inside it and offered up the prayers of Dedication and of thanksgiving for the blessings of Her Majesty's long reign, after which the Choir sang the hymn, "Thou art the way, &c." The procession then passed in order through the Lych Gate and entered the Church by the south porch, marching up the centre aisle to the Choir stall, the Bishop taking the chair which had been placed for him at the top of the chancel steps.

The Confirmation Service was then commenced. There were 81 candidates, 68 belonging to our own parish, viz. :—29 males and 39 females, and 13 from Wortley Parish.

Before the laying on of hands the Bishop reminded the candidates of the importance of the solemn occasion, pointing out to them that the promise they were about to make was one which should have an effect upon their whole lives.

Religion, he said, is not a thing to be reserved for old age or death. It is a life. Our Lord has said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life," and and we, who are His scholars, need to give our whole lifetime to learning of Him cheerfully and gladly. We are not to look upon a religious life as a sad and gloomy one, but as a really joyful one. Christ prayed to God that His joy might be in His people, that their joy might be full, and so our religious life should be a happy, cheerful life, blessed from first to last by that inward peace and joy, which comes from keeping our promises to God. To keep these promises is difficult; but just as the Holy Spirit has already been given to us in Baptism, so now, on entering this new stage of life, and surrounded by new circumstances, God gives us fresh spiritual strength; and it is in the comfort of this thought that we can make our Confirmation promise.

After all had been confirmed, the Bishop again addressed the candidates on the subject of Holy Communion, to which highest of all privileges they were admitted by Confirmation. He trusted that they all would be regular in their attendance at that Service, and spoke of this as a Duty to God, to our neighbours and to ourselves.

In the first place, Jesus Christ has asked us to do this for Him. It is our Eucharist, or, our duty of thanksgiving to God for our Redemption by His Son. It is also our duty to our neighbour, because in it we pray for others, and we are sharers together with others of the spiritual food of Christ's Body and Blood. There is often great difficulty in standing alone, or doing a duty alone while others neglect their duty, and this difficulty will be overcome if those confirmed together would help each other by resolving to come together regularly to Holy Communion. And it is a duty which we owe to ourselves. We know that our aim in life is to become what God's will is we should be, to build up our character so that it may resemble the character of Jesus Christ.

This character grows in each of us as life goes on; and just as the body, if it is to grow and be preserved, requires feeding, so it is also with the character. Christ feeds us in the Holy Communion, giving us His own life, for He has told us, "He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood dwelleth in Me, and I in him."

We must all come with the same thoughts to Holy Communion as we come to Confirmation. We are weak, we need strengthening. We are sinful, we need cleansing. We need to examine ourselves, to confess our sins, and so come to be fed and purified, and sent on our way with divine strength.