

CHURCH BELLRINGING IN BOLTON.

The Lancashire Association of Change Ringers held their annual meeting at Bolton on Saturday, and in view of a tablet being unveiled to the memory of the late Mr. Joel Redford, of this town, who was general secretary for 16 years, there was an unusually large attendance of members. The visit was heralded by ringing at the Parish Church, Holy Trinity, St. George's, All Souls', The Saviour's, Deane Church and St. Peter's, Heathhills. Later in the afternoon a service was held at Holy Trinity Church, followed by a meeting in the schools in the evening. The shortened evensong in the church was numerously attended. The Vicar (the Rev. T. Taylor-Evans, B.A.) was the preacher, and the Revs. H. J. Elson, M.A. (vicar of St. George's and President of the Association), H. F. Lloyd (vicar of St. Michael's and All Angels, Wigan), and A. W. Baxter, M.A., also took part in the service. Preaching from Peter i., 10 and 11, the Vicar urged the importance of diligence in spiritual as well as in secular life, and paid a tribute to the bell ringers for their devoted labours. Of all Christian workers he knew of none to whom belonged a greater privilege than that which attached to the bellringers of God's Church.

The Message of the Bells

was to tell the Master's people that He desired their presence at His house to worship Him as their Lord and God. It was true that at times the bells told of other scenes and messages. A peculiarity of the bellringers' work was that while other workers for God were seen and their names and labours trumpeted abroad and emblazoned on the scrolls of God's beautiful Church, the bellringer rang out his message unseen and unknown. In woe and sadness, in pleasure and gladness, now softly stealing, now loudly pealing, the bells had a message for all. That day they were peculiarly called together, because they were remembering one of their number who had gone to his rest, but who for many years rang out his Master's message and came at the call himself to worship his God. The late Mr. Redford was held in the highest esteem and set them all a splendid example.—The service over, the Rev. H. J. Elson unveiled a beautiful marble tablet in the porch of the church to the memory of Mr. Redford, and spoke of the uniring interest in the work of the Association which their late brother displayed. On behalf of the church, the clergy and officers, the memorial was formally accepted by the vicar, and Mr. H. De Bell, one of the wardens. The tablet bears the following inscription: "To the glory of God. This tablet is erected by the Lancashire Association of Change Ringers in affectionate remembrance of Joel Redford, a ringer in this tower, who for sixteen years gave faithful service as secretary of the association. He entered into rest on February 13th, 1880, aged 38 years, and his body lies in the churchyard of St. James's, Beckett-street." Tea was afterwards partaken of, and subsequently

The Business Meeting

took place, presided over by the Rev. H. J. Elson, who was supported by the hon. secretaries, Messrs. A. E. Wreaks and J. Wilson, and Mr. H. W. Jackson, all of Bolton. The Chairman explained that it was originally intended to hold the meeting at Preston, but on account of the unveiling ceremony it was wisely arranged that the gathering should take place at Bolton. Proceeding, he said Bolton was a good centre, and added that the town fortunately possessed seven peals of eight bells. During the year there had been considerable progress, and the record of 81 peals had been scored. Bearing on this he wished to offer a few words of advice, partly suggested through his having come in possession of a tower himself. He desired them all to be enthusiastic in the cause, and at the same time to have consideration for the feelings of people living in the immediate neighbourhood of churches. They must remember that near many town churches there were numerous shops, and it was a real trial to shopkeepers if the bells were going for three hours at a stretch. Then there might also be cases of sickness, so that he wished the ringers to shift about for practices, etc., and not regularly fix upon the same towers. Injury had been done to the

Popularity of Bellringing

in England by too frequent pealings in certain centres. There was another point—the clashing of bells when a company were practising new methods. This was often trying to people who were forced listeners outside. As one so deeply interested in bells as anybody present, he did not like this striking, and to prevent it he urged the use of handbells until the method had been acquired.—A report was presented showing the membership to be 816, 116 having been elected during the year. The financial statement revealed a deficiency of £19 on the year's working.—The Rev. H. J. Elson was re-elected president, and the following appointments were also made:—General secretary, Mr. A. E. Wreaks; ringing secretary, Mr. J. Shepherd, Bacup; assistant secretary, Mr. J. Wilson; and treasurer, Mr. H. W. Jackson. It was decided to hold the next annual meeting at Preston. Thanks were tendered to the Vicar of Holy Trinity, the authorities who had allowed the visitors to ring in the towers, the Memorial Committee, and the president and officers, one speaker describing the Rev. H. J. Elson as an accomplished ringer well-known in the bell world. After the meeting, peals were rung at several churches.