

MR. GLADSTONE & THE RELIGIOUS DISABILITIES REMOVAL BILL.

Mr. Gladstone's insidious motion to throw open the Lord Lieutenantcy of Ireland and the Lord Chancellorship of England to Roman Catholics was defeated by a decisive majority on Wednesday week. Mr. W. H. Smith and Colonel Sanderson did well in drawing attention to the exceeding inconsistency of Mr. Gladstone, who only a few years ago wrote with almost unnecessary heat and violence against the Roman Catholic Church, charging its members with a latent disloyalty to the Throne. The Roman Catholic Church was then, in Mr. Gladstone's mind, a dangerous organisation, threatening the civil and religious liberties of mankind. 'Vaticanism' was a thing his soul abhorred, and the Ecclesiastic who wielded the awful powers of the world to come was the great spiritual enemy against whose ways England was bound to protest. 'From the Bishop of Rome and all his detestable enormities' prayed the devout Mr. Gladstone, 'Good Lord deliver us.' Now all this is changed, and according to Mr. Gladstone's latest utterance there will not be true liberty in these countries until it is possible to see a member of the Roman Catholic Church wearing the Viceregal crown in Ireland, and another member of the same Church seated on the English woolsack. Could it be possible to produce a more complete and absolute *volte face*?

Twitted with his extraordinary change of front, Mr. Gladstone made the lame excuse, that since he wrote his pamphlet he had received such assurances (!) of loyalty from members of the Roman Catholic Church as had satisfied him that his former fears were groundless; he is now as implicit a believer in the devotion of the Roman Catholic Church to the principles of civil and religious liberty as he was formerly a disbeliever in them. It was only after this fashion, when weeks of opportunity had been afforded him for putting the best face he could on his own inconsistency, and knowing that his writings would be brought up against him that Mr. Gladstone was able to defend himself.

But there was another terribly weak place in his defensive armour. He apparently had no reply to the very just retort that he had never brought forward a measure of the kind during the many years he was in office, but on the contrary, when sounded on the subject, had replied that his Government had no intention of doing anything of the sort. Suddenly he has found out that this is a shocking grievance; he found out the same thing about the Church of Ireland when it suited the political exigencies of the moment, as also about the land, and now about Home Rule for Ireland.

Still it will be a difficulty with many to discover what was the motive that actuated Mr. Gladstone in bringing forward his motion when he did. There was no agitation on the subject, and the right hon. gentleman must have known the extreme probability of his defeat. It was also a motion not calculated to strengthen the devotion of his Protestant Nonconformist supporters. On the whole, we are forced to the conclusion that if not a wanton interruption of the business of the Government, or else a mere trial of strength, Mr. Gladstone had some secret end in view. It will not be without requiring an equivalent that the Roman hierarchy in Ireland have thrown in all their strength on Mr. Gladstone's side; and it serves his purpose well, now that he is without the responsibilities of office, to show himself their devoted servant.

We observe that the *Guardian* has in this matter sided entirely with Mr. Gladstone, and regrets the defeat of the bill, which it saw was inevitable. But through all the argument of our contemporary runs the fallacy that it is merely a question of religious disability. On the contrary, it is impossible in this, as on

every question that involves the claims of the Church of Rome in this country, to bury out of sight the political features of Romanism.

The Church of Rome is by no means a purely spiritual organization: on the contrary, it is a great politico ecclesiastical force; and it was the consciousness of this that brought about the Act of Settlement. Rome has always interfered in her own interests in the politics of those countries where she has gained any position, and she has always been a disturbing and disintegrating force. She has shown herself such in France, Germany, and Italy. It has been so for many years in Ireland, and it will be so again in England, if ever the Roman Catholic Church recovers her power in that country.—*The Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette.*

TO-MORROW'S LOAD.

So many people vex and worry themselves by too much anxious thought and care for the future. Certainly God does not intend them to be improvident and expect miracles to be worked if they do not take care for their earthly needs, and provide for themselves and their own.

But he does not mean that people should try and forecast the future, and worry themselves by wondering how they could bear such and such a trial, which possibly will never come, and if it does, in some different form from what they anticipated.

Day by day we ask for our daily bread, and let us also take that in a spiritual sense, and believe that God will give our souls their daily bread of food and support, to meet whatever He may send or permit.

Have you ever seen these beautiful lines, new, I should imagine, to many of us?—

Charge not thyself with the weight of a year,
Child of the Master, faithful and dear.
Choose not the cross for the coming week,
For that is more than He bids thee seek.

Bend not thine arms for to-morrow's load;
Thou mayest leave that to thy gracious God
"Daily" only, He saith to thee,
"Take up thy cross and follow Me."

To act on this principle is the secret of all rest and peace in everyday life. It gives calmness to the soul, and the mind is filled with peace. The future, try as they may to peer into it, is hidden from all but God.

He knows it all in its every detail, and he will give thee strength and courage to bear all He sends; the guidance that is needed, the provision for needs, temporal and spiritual; the daily bread and the daily light. But He does not give in advance.

God will not give you to-day strength for to-morrow's cross. Wait till to-morrow comes, and you will then have it, if you seek it and depend on Him to give it.

By this means you will learn real humility; for depending upon God, and not upon our own plans and strength, teaches us that invaluable lesson. And if we are honestly trying to seek Him in all things, and bear all trial for His sweet sake, then let us trust Him fully and implicitly for strength for "to-morrow's load."
—*Cottager and Artizan.*

'You never get to the end of Christ words,' said Dean Stanley. 'There is something in them always behind. They pass into proverbs, they pass into laws, they pass into doctrines, they pass into consolations; but they never pass away, and after all the use that is made of them, they are still not exhausted.'

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OUR CONFIRMATION CLASSES—THE STARTING POINT.

The Church requires that all her baptised children should be 'brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him so soon as they can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments in the vulgar tongue, and be further instructed in the Church Catechism set forth for that purpose.' Here we have a plain direction to bring our children to the Bishop to be confirmed by him, and a plain handbook is given to us for their instruction previously—the Catechism set forth by authority for the purpose, and which includes within it the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments. In accordance with this order we have, first, the Baptismal Services, next 'the Catechism—that is to say, an instruction to be learned by every person before he can be brought to be confirmed by the Bishop—and lastly, the Order of Confirmation, or Laying on of hands upon those who are baptised and come to years of discretion.' How great their unfaithfulness to the Church, as well as to the souls of the children of their flock, who neglect this order, and withhold or are careless about this instruction in the Catechism, we need scarcely say! That such unfaithfulness existed in the past is only too well known; thank God, a great change for the better has come over the Church, and we trust there are but few Sunday schools now in the land where the parish clergyman sets himself up in his wisdom as wiser than the Church, and as if he knew of a 'better way.'

The secret of this opposition to the Catechism lay in a denial of God's grace. Under the influence of a cold and cheerless Calvinism there were those who refused to believe that God was indeed the Father of all little children, and that He could love all with an equal love, and could adopt them to be His own in the ordinance of baptism. It was natural that those who refused to believe thus of God were unwilling to teach the Catechism and set forth this blessed truth. When we turn, however, to that 'Instruction to be learned of every person before he is brought to be confirmed by the Bishop,' we see that this truth of God's grace and adopting love is placed in the forefront. There is no hesitation in the language; no opportunity for 'charitable hypothesis,' as it is cruelly said. The opening statement is unequivocal in its character, and it is to be made 'of every person.' What is there predicted of every baptised infant is this, 'that in his baptism he was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.' The Church starts from this; it cannot start from loss; it starts from the germ of the Christian life bestowed in baptism. It is the 'state of salvation' into which all the baptised are called by the grace of God, though it by no means necessarily involves continuance in the grace and faith of that 'state of salvation.' The Confirmation Service likewise testifies to this state. The Bishop prays on behalf of those whom God has vouchsafed to 'regenerate by water and the Holy Ghost,' and unto whom He has 'forgiven all their sins,' that they may be strengthened with the Holy Ghost the Comforter.

When, therefore, the parish priest is called on to deal with his Confirmation classes, he has this great leverage on his side. He can begin with privilege, with Christian position, with the grace of God that was bestowed (and he trusts not in vain) upon them at their baptism. If the Church believed otherwise it would have put a very different handbook of instruction into the hands of its ministers. It would have spoken of 'conversion,' or of a there-and-then turning to God, of a seeking for the Christian life then, of a Christian beginning to be made then, and would have said