

The Church Guardian.

Upholds the Doctrines and Rubrics of the Prayer Book.

"Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."—Eph. vi. 24.
"Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."—Jude: 3.

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AFTER CHRISTIANITY, WHAT?

The so-called "progressive" school of unbelievers not unfrequently say that as polytheism was an advance on fetishism, and Judaism was an advance on polytheism, and Christianity was an advance on Judaism, by and by there will come an advance on Christianity. But what advance? What advance is possible, or conceivable, in respect to the perfect Founder of Christianity, our Blessed Lord? Whether He is regarded as divine or as human or as combining the virtues and attributes of both, what prophet can so much as hope to equal Him? Now there never can be an advance on Christianity till there is an advance on Christ, for Christ is Christianity. He is in all essential matters the polity and the doctrine, the law and its fulfilment, the salvation and the life. If a wider religion than Christianity means anything, it means a wiser teacher, a more compassionate helper, a more perfect and exalted character. Sooner than the appearance of such a character in the world there are ten thousand more chances of the utter disappearance from it of all religion.

What is to be the advance on the teachings of Christ? John Stuart Mill and others have said, indeed, that the ethics of the Gospel are not complete, but what is to complete them? What is to supplement the Ten Commandments or the Sermon on the Mount or the summing up of the law and the prophets to love God with all the heart and one's neighbor as himself? The truth is the ethics of the Gospel are so complete that to some it seems almost hopeless to fulfil their requirements.

What is to be an advance on Christ as a practical helper and healer of those in trouble? The world has been full of philosophers and idealists who talked much and wisely, as the world goes, and did little. But Christ, who talked much and wisely, and always to the point, did infinitely more in the way of help and compassion. What is to be the advance on Him who declared, as the result of His work, that "the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up and the poor have the Gospel preached to them"?

What is to be an advance on Christianity as throwing light on the matter of a future life beyond the grave? What has fetishism to say about it, or paganism, or Mohammedanism, or even Judaism, except obscurely? But our Blessed Lord, over and above speculating on the subject, gave proof of the resurrection by his own rising. Even the author of the book of Job asked doubtingly, not to say despairingly, "If a man die shall he live again?" But Christ answered the question once and for all. What more could be hoped for, or what could be even hoped for at all, from any absolute religion or religion of science? Any new and wider religion must bring life and immortality to light more clearly. Speculation will not signify: it must deal in demonstration. To improve upon Christianity a more convincing demonstration must be given than was given by its author. But this is absurd. Nothing can be stronger than a fact, and no fact can be more convincing than that of Christ's resurrection from the grave.

We say, with confidence, that any dreamers of new religion, so far from throwing greater light on the problem of a future life, would leave it in pagan obscurity. Nothing is to be hoped for from speculations, intentions, or pretended disclosures of any kind. But this doctrine, which is

one of the corner-stones of religion, which lies at the foundation of obedience, piety, hope, and without which the idea of religion vanishes, and life becomes sordid and ignoble, has been as certainly demonstrated as anything can be.

After Christianity, what? Nothing. Scepticism means not something more and better, but nothing at all. Of a brighter day it gives no assurance; its face is toward darkness and despair. It banishes Christ to find no Saviour and no salvation. For the verities and hopes of the Gospel it gives us conjectures and fantasies, with speculations about the unknowableness of God and the future, or dreary philosophies which end in a hopeless and disgusting pessimism. It is no compliment to Christianity to say it is good, but there is something better. If it is not as good as the best, it is, essentially, no better than the worst. If it cannot do for each and all the utmost that is possible for any religion, then it makes little difference whether men are Christians or Jews, Turks or infidels. It really ends in failure, and lands them in the conclusion that all religions are equally good and equally worthless.—*The Churchman*.

DIFFUSIVE INFLUENCE OF THE CHURCH.

The Church is a great fact which every man ought to measure. . . . She is a world embracing institution. . . . Like the air we breathe, she bathes our whole being with influences which we do not analyze, and pours upon those even who love her least floods of intellectual and moral light.—*Liddon's Bampton Lectures*, 1866, p. 145.

The Church is the source whence the individual dissenter received, either indirectly in his youth or through his immediate forefathers, that religious knowledge which, when he became a separatist, made him a Dissenter instead of an Infidel; and, however unwelcome the truth to his present feelings, he may conclude from all the experience of society that his own descendants will worship in the Church, and that perhaps even in his lifetime.—*Lon. Quar. Review*, Dec., 1836, 199.

It is a common remark in England that no carriage goes for three generations to a Dissenting meeting-house.—*North Brit. Review*, May, 1860, 186.

In these later and smoother days aspiring Presbyterians of social ambition in Edinburgh begin to think the English Chapel a step in advance of their ancestral High Church. . . . There can be little doubt that this sentiment of a certain superiority and refinement, an idea that Presbyterianism answers very well for the common people, but that Episcopacy is necessary for gentle folk, still exists despite all modern ameliorations.—*Blackwood's Mag.*, June, 1853, 723.

There is no instance since the Great Rebellion in which the decided sentiment of the Established Clergy of England has not gradually become the sentiment of the nation.—*Ibid*, Oct., 441.

The Church of England is the mightiest and most influential national Church which Protestantism can show, and the one which can most nearly rival Rome.

It is not only the beating heart and the thinking head, but the right arm, and the political and social bulwark of Protestantism.—*Schaff's "America"*, 155.

It is plainly the Mission duty of the Episcopal

Church in America to restrain the unchurchly, and centrifugal forces of ultra Protestantism. By her excellent Prayer Book, she supplies to a much greater extent than the German Denominations, the defects of a purely subjective, and jejune worship.—*Ibid*, 114.

In our large towns and cities, both parties, fashionable weddings, in short, worldliness, is at least checked during Lent. Fashion says "Hush! it isn't the thing you know to have parties during Lent." We are lifted by spiritual tides. There are whirls and *vortices* of social and magnetic power, which no Christian laborer can afford to disregard.—*T. K. Beecher, "Episcopal Church"*, 1870.

THE RECTOR OF FALMOUTH ON THE PROPERTY OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

In a sermon delivered in the parish Church at Falmouth by the Rector, the Rev. J. Wright, on Sunday, Sept. 10th, when offerings were made in behalf of the Truro Cathedral Fund, the preacher said: "At the time of the Reformation no new Church was formed, but an ancient one was reformed and purified; for what the Church of England is now, it was fifteen hundred years ago. It was governed by Bishops, Priests, and Deacons then as now. No part of the property of the Romish Church passed away at the Reformation to the Church of England. A portion of their property passed away, but it passed into the hands of laymen, not Churchmen, who remain possessors of it unto this day.

Moreover, bear in mind that there are great misconceptions with respect to tithes, and that these views are held by good, worthy and respectable men, who certainly would not hold such views if they knew the right ones, which the greatest authorities in this land maintain—namely, that tithes are not the property, and never were the property, of either landlord or tenant, but are what is termed in law a "reserve rate," and no landlord or tenant in England ever paid the tithe out of his own pocket. It was "reserved," and therefore the title to it is much older than the title to the estate.

HOUSE-TO-HOUSE VISITING.

It is astonishing how much can be done by good, honest, thorough visiting. As it is the fashion now-a-days amongst a certain clique of the younger clergy to disparage visiting, and to say that the people must come to them, and that the Priest's place is in the church and not in the parish, I am the more anxious to give my testimony as to the value of house-to-house visiting in such a district as St. Peter's. Our work was entirely done by visiting. We made friends with the people in their own homes, and thus got them to attend the services of the Church; if we had worked on the other principle St. George's Mission might just as well have remained at the West End. I have no patience with those who make a ridiculous theory the cloak for their own incompetence or laziness. Our Blessed Lord chose not angels, but *men*, as His ministers, in spite of their imperfections and unworthiness, that by means of human sympathy men might win an entrance into sinners' hearts for the Divine Love. Besides, His own example is our best pattern in all true missionary work.—*Rev. Robert Linklater, in Biography of Charles Lowder*.