

# 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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## THE FREEDOM OF THE CHURCH.

Practically no Church is so free as our own. The evidence of this freedom is twofold. There is first of all her comprehensiveness, and there is secondly her activity.

Her comprehensiveness is the great boast of the Church of England. If we have been tempted to forget or despise this our heritage, death has recalled us to a better mind. The graves of Arthur Penrhyn Stanley and Edward Bouverie Pusey are hardly yet closed. We have mourned over the one and the other with equal sincerity. Each has taught us valuable lessons. The Church would have been seriously impoverished by the exclusion of either. May this comprehensiveness always be ours. At the present moment at least there seems little fear of our losing it; for from the force of circumstances it is most jealously guarded by those whose temper of mind and cast of opinion would least predispose them in this way.

But a still stronger evidence than the comprehension of various men, is the manifestation of varied activity. Liberty means the capacity of movement and of action. If this is the truest test of freedom, then no Church is or has been more free than our own. No doubt this very energy tends in its restlessness to make any restraint feel galling. But it is often good for the moral health of an institution, as it is good for the moral health of an individual, that it should submit to restraints and limitations. They are its proper discipline.

Never since the earliest days of Christianity has any Church exhibited greater signs of active, healthy, vigorous life. It is the manifoldness of the developments, which arrests and compels our attention. Public worship, devotional literature, hymnody, architecture, and music, charitable and educational institutions, parochial organizations, Mission preaching, Bible classes, guilds, Sisterhoods—in whatever direction we look it is the same.

And no Church since the beginning has seemed so manifestly pointed out by the finger of Almighty God to fulfil a great part in His providential designs as the Church of England in our day. She has not broken with any social or intellectual aspirations of her own age; and yet she has surrendered no sacred principles or traditions of the past. She stands midway between the irregular forces of Protestant Nonconformity and the rigid militarism of Rome. She is showing daily more and more aptitude for dealing with the masses at home, though she has still very much to learn. She is occupying year by year a more prominent position among the Churches abroad. The see of Canterbury in strong and vigorous hands has been something more than the Primacy of All England. It has proved the Patriarchate, not indeed in name, but in effect, of a vast aggregate of Anglican communities scattered over the continents and islands throughout the world. The sense of her catholicity has been restored to the Church of England through the spread of the English race.

Her mission is unique; her capabilities and opportunities are magnificent. Shall we spoil this potentiality, shall we stultify this career, shall we mar this destiny by impatience, by self-will, by party spirit, by misguided and headstrong zeal, by harsh words; embittering strife, by any narrowness of temper or of aim or of view? A grave responsibility—no graver can well be conceived—rests upon us all. Never were our hopes brighter;

never were our anxieties keener; never was there greater need of that divine charity which beareth all things, believeth all things. Happy they who so feel, and so act; for theirs is the crown of crowns. Peace be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.—[*Bp. Durham's Charge.*]

## AN OLD PARISH CHURCH.

In the Parish of Ribchester, near Preston, in Lancashire, is still existing, and in use, a most interesting little Church, called Stidd, or Stydd. It is said to be the most ancient ecclesiastical edifice in the north of England. Amongst other interesting features this little Church contains on the south side a small, narrow, "skewed" or "squint" window. It is supposed that the date is in the reign of King Stephen; and it is the Chapel of a preceptory of the Order of the Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem. No vestige of the house of residence, or preceptory, remains. It is in a sad state of dilapidation. It is possible that, were the existence and the ruinous state of this interesting relic of the ancient Order of the Knights of St. John brought to the notice of the modern Order of that name, they might assist in its restoration. We hear much of the preservation of ancient monuments. Here is one full of objects of antiquarian interest and actually in use; Divine Service being held in it once a month, when the congregation of the Parish Church proceed thither in a body, formed into an extempore procession, a custom which has descended to them from their forefathers. The quaint little town, or village, of Ribchester is situated in the midst of lovely scenery, but little known to the many who go on the Continent to see scenery perhaps no way superior to what lies in their native land. It is easy of access, full of objects of interest to the antiquarian, and to searchers after the picturesque. It was an important place during the occupation of Britain by the Romans. Many coins, incised stones, and other evidences of the Roman occupancy even yet turn up from time to time. The present Parish Church is an excellent example of a village Church, considering that Lancashire is not a county remarkable for good Churches. The spacious Chancel has just been restored by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. The nave is in want of restoration. The inhabitants of the Parish may be considered unable to restore either of their beautiful Churches, when it is added that handloom weaving still lingers, in a moribund condition, amongst the cottagers of this extremely primitive race. This Parish Church is considered also to date from the time of Stephen; its attached chantries somewhat later. But, doubtless, the present structure was preceded by one of an earlier date: and that by a Temple of Minerva, two pillars of which are in the care of the writer. The name of Reginald Heber occurs as Curate in the registers. Bishop Samuel Wilberforce was once offered the incumbency.

## NON-READING CHRISTIANS.

What can be said to that large per cent. of the church who read no missionary journal, and know next to nothing of the condition of the world, the noble men and women in the field for Christ's sake, or of the actual progress of the kingdom in the earth? We may not arrest the attention of one of

them, for the supposition is that only by chance will they read if we write.

It seems queer enough that people who read (1) prophecy, should care so little about its fulfillment! Or are they like the good soul who had such confidence in his minister's soundness that he slept through the sermon from beginning to end—so they, as to the Lord's bringing it out all right? But what if they were to awake to the fact that they are to travail with the Lord to this end, and have something to do in hastening His supremacy in the earth? Would they then not care to know, how the kingdom in which they have embarked everything, as they profess, is getting on towards its consummation? And yet those dear souls, most likely, know all about the last novel, and the daily paper is never neglected!—And is the daily paper even, so much nearer our heart—the purely secular—the strife and corruption of parties—the crime and folly of yesterday, the gossip of to-day, the out-look for to-morrow!

We do not inveigh against the secular press. We only say that no kingdom of this world has anything to offer compared with that whose Prince and Lord is the Alpha and Omega, and whose heralds are abroad in the earth to-day. What are the tidings from the front, where our brethren are in the thick of the fight against our common enemy, in behalf of Christ and His conquering faith? And do we not care? Children of the kingdom—disciples of the Master, and not care? Oh! this is pitiful! Sadder yet, it is true of multitudes!—[*The Gospel in all Lands.*]

## A WORD TO CLERGY AND LAITY.

I know the sore temptations which come to the clergy, the weariness and loneliness of missionary life; the anxious care which comes of a scanty support; the hope of relief from writing sermons, and the thought that some one else can do better. I know of no success which was not won by the united labor of men who knew how to work and wait. Brethren, we do not go to minister to saints, but to save sinners. It will be very like heaven when you find a cure which has in it no selfish, self-willed, fault-finding folk. Such people lived in the primitive Church; and it was them that St. Paul said, "I tell you weeping, they are the enemies of the cross of Christ." We have no right to abandon the field committed to our care, unless plainly called away by the providence of God; unless incapacitated for ministerial work, we have no right to turn aside to secular pursuits. The vow of holy orders is upon us; and this vow will be the measure of our accountability in the judgment. Your lot is a hard one. Never allow yourself to brood over troubles. Your Master trod this rough way before you and these very sorrows may be the badge of your fellowship with Him. The field may be barren and yet be the Lord's harvest field, where He will fulfil to you His promise that "he who goeth forth bearing precious seed and weeping, shall, doubtless, come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

Brethren of the laity, we are men like you. We need your sympathy, your love and your prayers. We have an office that would be heavy for angels' shoulders. We ask nothing for the poor, frail, fallible men; but we do ask everything for Jesus' sake, and say to you, with the apostle, "Pray for us."—*Bp. Whipple's Convention address, 1882.*