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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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ECCLESIASTICAL NOTES.

THE BISHOP OF EXETER'S VISITATION.—We make the following extracts from the primary charge of Bishop Bickersteth, who is classed as who is classed an Evangelical:—

DAILY SERVICE.

At Honiton, on Wednesday, his Lordship said that in his judgment the *humblest house of prayer ought*, with rare exceptions, to have its *DAILY service* and its *WEEKLY celebration*. Many clergymen seemed to regard this as impossible in their parishes, because their churches were far away from the bulk of the inhabitants, and a daily service, they said, would be attended only by their own families and a few aged parishioners. As to the weekly celebration, they found it difficult to gather their communicants together once a month. Now, the Preface to the Prayer Book said:—

All priests and deacons are to say daily the Morning and Evening Prayers, either privately or openly, not being let by sickness or some other urgent cause; and the curate administering in every parish church or chapel, and, not being otherwise reasonably hindered, shall say the same in the parish church or chapel, when he ministereth, and shall cause a bell to be tolled thereunto a convenient time before he begin, that the people may come to hear God's Word and pray with him.

This habit had widely fallen into disuse; but had that disuse tended to greater devotion? He thought not. Was family prayer—and he should be very sorry to do anything to weaken that great bond of piety—so general that it supplied to all daily opportunities of united worship? Was family prayer customary with all those who would pray in church? He thought not. To his Lordship's mind, there was something *inexpressibly dreary and desolate in the house of God being closed throughout the week*. A closed church repelled rather than attracted the heart's sympathy; but a church opened daily, the tolling of the bell and the little company of supplicants being known to assemble there, had a quiet but deep influence on the minds of others, even if only two or three. St. Chrysostom's prayer had lost none of its virtue by the lapse of ages; the Saviour's promise would not be pleaded in vain.

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THE USE OF CHURCHES FOR PRIVATE PRAYER.

Why should God's house *ever* be closed? Not that he thought private prayer was of more avail in God's house than at home; but there were many especially, not only in the larger towns, who could not obtain solitude and silence in their own homes, and it seemed only *right that the house of prayer should be available for their use*. He remembered how earnestly this was advocated by the revered Hugh McNeile, of Liverpool, who said working people found it hard to obey the divine command, "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret." Perhaps they had a large family and only one or two rooms, and found it very difficult to secure a quiet corner for prayer and the study of the

Word. In going to their work, or in returning at nightfall or at noon-day meal-time, they should snatch a few minutes of thought and prayer in the court of the Lord's house. Surely if this usage became general, new glory would clothe the promise, "My house shall be called the House of prayer for all people."

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WEEKLY CELEBRATIONS.

With regard to *weekly celebrations*, his Lordship believed the Church was returning to the freshness of the first love, and was claiming more and more urgently the celebration of the heavenly feast upon every returning Lord's Day. He believed that when worshippers who had already been accustomed to weekly communion came to a church where the celebration was not weekly they left hungry and dissatisfied; and, further, that when this spiritual appetite was lacking, the clergy did well to try, by God's grace, to awaken and deepen it; and, lastly, he believed that when the setting forth of Christ crucified did not hold its central and proper position in sermons (deeply as he deplored so grievous a loss, for only as Christ was lifted up would men be drawn to Him), there, in many a parish, the weekly celebration, according to the plain and simple ritual of the Prayer Book, supplied to the faithful the spiritual sustenance which they vainly craved from their pastor's teaching.

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EXCESSIVE RITUAL.

With regard to the few cases of excessive ritual which had been brought before his Lordship, he had urged and still was urging the greatest forbearance on the part of both pastor and people. He could not say that no persistent infringement of the lawful usages of the Church would justify an appeal to the court (for the laity had their rights as well as the clergy); but he was sure it should be the *very last resort* so long as the only ultimate penalty which law courts could impose upon a recusant clerk was imprisonment instead of suspension, and, if still refractory, deprivation of benefice. *Prosecutions seemed to him only to aggravate the evil they were meant to suppress*. He felt, therefore, bound, except in extreme cases, to exercise the right of veto which the Public Worship Regulation Act conferred upon him; but he was sure that resolve gave him the strongest claim upon his clergy for their submission to his judgment and admonition as their father in God. He trusted he should never appeal in vain to those who had promised such submission in their solemn ordination vows. He was sure that it was by such a spirit of mutual confidence that we should best fulfil the Apostle's charge:—"Let us, therefore, follow the things which make for peace, and things wherewith we may edify one another."

WORTH NOTING.—Some very interesting statistics as to the position and work, both of the Church and of Nonconformity, in the Diocese of Bath and Wells, have been collected by a clergyman of that diocese. They bring to light the fact that out of 520 parishes in the diocese there are 195 which have no public religious worship and instruction except that

provided by the Church. As might be expected, these 195 parishes are among the small ones in the county. A very few, we are told, number a population of under 100; a very few again, number a population of over 400; all the rest vary between 100 and 400. They are also found to be, (1), among the most secluded; (2), among the poorest. These two facts speak for themselves, and demonstrate with an eloquence of their own the value, (1), of the parochial system; (2), of an endowed Church.

CANON LIDDON DECLINES THE BISHOPRIC OF EDINBURGH.—Canon Liddon has written a letter to the Dean of Edinburgh, in which he says:—

After giving the subject my best and most anxious attention, I have come to the conclusion that I ought to ask you to allow me to decline this solemn invitation. During a great part of last year I was seriously out of health, so much so as to be obliged to give up my regular occupations nearly altogether; and although, by God's mercy, and as a consequence of the long rest which the doctors insisted on, I am feeling fairly well now, I have yet to discover how far or for how long a time I can return to my old habits of work. Until this is clear, it would appear at least doubtful whether I ought to undertake new and very serious duties. There is another consideration which I have in former times insisted on with others, and which I could hardly set aside in my own case without inconsistency. In order to bring the true claims of the Church in Scotland before the mind of the Scottish people, with a reasonable hope of success, it is important that her rulers and chief ministers should be Scotchmen. With Englishmen for Bishops, she will always, I fear, appear a foreign system in the eyes of a patriotism so naturally sensitive as that of the Scotch, and her worship and action will be described, as I often regret to hear it described in Scotland, as that of the "English" Church. I have not a drop of Scotch blood in my veins, so far as I know. This consideration would, no doubt, have been present to the mind of the electors, but they could not have known—as I know too well—how little I could offer that would outweigh so great a disadvantage. I ought not to allow them to make the discovery when it would be too late to correct the mistake.

ACCESSION.—A very able and popular Dissenting minister, the Rev. Thomas Miroms, late pastor of Sutton Coldfield Congregational Church, near Birmingham, was lately received into the Church of England, and has been appointed to the Curacy of St. David's Church, Birmingham.

THE RELIGION THAT IS NEXT TO NOTHING.—Concerning the Unitarian, Rev. William B. Greene, of West Brookfield, this story is told: A man died in the neighborhood, and the reverend colonel was called upon to officiate at the funeral. Some time afterwards, on inquiring why he was summoned to the funeral of a man not of his flock, he was told:—"Mr. — did not believe in much of anything, and we thought your belief came the nearest to nothing of anybody's, so we sent for you."