

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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EIGHTEEN CENTURIES OF THE CHURCH IN ENGLAND.

A REVIEW OF REV. A. H. HORE'S BOOK.

The Church of England occupies a peculiar place in Catholic Christendom. It attracts to itself the attention of all thinkers upon theological matters, for while it holds fast to ancient custom, to Catholic truths, to divine commission and authority, it with equal hand sets forth individual liberty, the freedom of conscience, the right of all to know all in the plainest language, and without undue mystery. According to her, ancient customs are not to be retained unless they edify; Catholic Truth must be proved by Holy Writ; the Divine Commission must not be a cloak for spiritual despotism; authority must have the consent of the governed.

Such positions as these alike arrest the attention of the Protestant and the Ultramontane. Both wonder how such balance can be kept, and look again and still wonder more as they see the Church of England, truly Protestant and truly Catholic, affirming with equal voice the rights of man and the rights of God; of man, to be revered as man, to be a free agent, with reasonable soul and conscience independent;—of God to be obeyed, worshipped and feared.

Such a spectacle as this irresistibly compels notice, and hence it is that the Church of England stands forth at once to be admired and attacked by both Protestant and Ultramontane, to each alike she is a living contradiction of their claims. She asserts a liberty fairer and purer than any which the self-will of protestantism can give, she asserts an authority and appeals to an antiquity more venerable than the Vatican or Trent, for she proclaims and proves her apostolic lineage, and holds forth with no wavering voice the faith once for all delivered to the saints, which was promulgated by the Undivided Catholic Church in the Apostles' Creed and the Symbol of Nicea.

This spiritual preeminence and importance of the English Church is somewhat reflected in the political life and importance of the English nation. There is no other land on the face of the globe so small in extent which yet occupies such a large place in the history of men and nations. The influence of England is felt everywhere, all around the world, and the unique position which England holds as a nation is fully known. Her affairs are of as much interest to Republican America, as they are to Imperial Russia. She asserts in state affairs as much of real republicanism as we enjoy here under the stars and stripes. She asserts as much real prerogative for inherited worth and race, as prevails under the Eagles of Russia or Germany. By means too of her vast colonies and the pertinacity with which English laws and English habits are retained everywhere, the English nation and the English Church have each a world-wide influence.

Hence this book written with great fairness by its reverend author must be of special interest to Churchmen all over the world. "Eighteen Centuries of the Church in England" bridges for us on English soil, the years from day to day to the very presence of our Lord in Palestine. The object of the work "is to lay before English Churchmen an unbroken narrative of their Church from its commencement to the present day." In attractive and popular style it shows the fallacy of the idea that the Church in England was founded by the State at the Reformation. "So far from this being true,"

the author says "history shows that a Christian Church existed in this country of ours long before the Germans converted Britain into England, and long before Parliaments were thought of; the Reformers themselves tell us again and again that it was not the intention of the Reformation to innovate, but to restore; to root out recent corruptions that had crept in; and to restore what existed in the primitive and purer ages of the Church; and not to forsake and reject the Churches of Italy, France, Spain, Germany, or such like Churches."—*Living Church.*

WEAK PARISHES.

A rector of a small parish came to his Bishop, in distress, and said: "We are a little band, and constantly under the fire of an intense opposition. The wealth of the community is in hands unfriendly to us. The village newspaper opposes and misrepresents us. Sectarians misinterpret our teachings, revile our motives, and tempt away our Sunday-school children with bribes. How can we hold on?"

The Bishop asked him about the religious life in the parish. He replied to the effect that in that direction they have nothing to dishearten them. They are at peace among themselves. The people are constant and reverent at worship and Holy Communion. Nobody charges them with bad morals or low living, the wardens are earnest and watchful; the vestrymen are above reproach; the women are busy in charitable work; the weekly offering is well sustained; "when I preach a higher standard of living, they seem to respond and thank me for it. I think I can see that they grow in Christian graces."

The Bishop replied that he did not sympathize with his anxieties, he could not call that a feeble parish, but on the contrary it seemed to be strong in the most essential requisites. God was on their side and they need not fear what men should do or say.

Not far away from this little village is a parish, large in numbers, with much property, a well dressed congregation, and an expensive choir. But somehow they do not prosper; are always in trouble; frequently changing ministers; are internally divided; their offerings are stinted and irregular; and while they have had faithful ministers, there seems to be about them an air of indifference and secularity, most disheartening. For many years they have had a fitful life, and have hardly held their own.

Now, in reality, is not this the feeble parish? We cannot be too deeply impressed with the fact that it is the character within, not the members or the conditions surrounding, that makes a parish strong.

It is common to hear from small congregations, "If we had a talented minister, an eloquent, popular man, who would draw in from outside, we might prosper!" How little such seem to consider wherein lies their strength! How they overrate what a minister is to do, and underrate what, by the blessing of God, they must do themselves! They send off a good faithful minister, because in addition to his own work, he does not do theirs! They watch and wait for a "smart man," of a type that they will never find; and because they do not find him, they live a weak, sickly life, that does infinite discredit to the cause of the Church. We have visible proofs, that where there are a few faithful ones, it is possible to have a vigorous

Church life, and in the cultivation of that spiritual vigor, is the real growth. Other conditions are incidental.

Let us hear no more, "If we had a better minister—if we had a smart man—if we had a new Church—if we had more wealth, we might prosper!" If, with the small numbers and moderate surroundings, a body of Christ's people cannot sustain worship and enjoy and profit by the same to their spiritual growth and strength, do they deserve to prosper?—*Selected.*

LITURGICAL ENRICHMENT.

People's ideas vary wonderfully when they talk about the enrichment of the liturgy. One writer wants the collects improved. He says, "we want prayers that savor of the new thought of the new time." He then proceeds to give us collects of his own composition, which presumably have that savor. Well, let us smell some of them! Here is one for the Second Sunday in Advent which opens in this wise: "O God of light and love, who didst inspire Thy servants in old time to write Scriptures for our learning, * * * and who still inspirest Thy messengers to write and teach and preach, etc." This, then, is the new thought of the new time, that the nineteenth century preacher is inspired just as the writers of Holy Scriptures were. We do not regard this as a peculiarly aromatic savor. For the Sunday after Christmas, the new collect asks that we may be delivered "from all slaveries." It is peculiar to the new thought of the new time to use the plural when there is no earthly need of it and to our olfactory the custom savors of affectation. On the whole we believe the Church will prefer the old thought of the old time for a long while to come, and in the meantime let those who try to improvise collects keep out of print or expect to excite ridicule.—*Selected.*

GRAND COLLECTIONS.

It is said that a New York pastor took a home-missionary collection in his Church one day, a few years ago, that amounted to fourteen thousand and some hundreds of dollars, and it was reported in the papers next morning as the largest plate-collection that was ever taken in New York, or anywhere else, perhaps. The next Sunday he said to his people, "I am sorry the notice of that collection got into the papers. It may seem like boasting. And, lest there should be any boasting on the part of the congregation, I will tell you how it was. Ten thousand dollars was given by one man, and two thousand by another, and five hundred each by four others, and one hundred each by two or three others, and that leaves only about three hundred dollars for all of this great congregation; and that, certainly, is nothing to be proud of."

This is just about the style of giving in a very large part of our churches; the sums are smaller, but the proportions are the same. From four to ten persons give eighty per cent. or ninety per cent. of what is contributed—not because they have eighty per cent. or ninety per cent. of the means for giving, but because they have hearts to give. Examine your Church-collection and see if it be not so. If all gave as the few do, our good works would be largely increased. People are too willing to take credit to themselves for any display of liberality on the part of their Parish, when it comes from others and ought to make them ashamed of their own poor offerings.