

# 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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## MR. GLADSTONE ON THE LOSS OF RELIGIOUS CONVICTIONS.

THOSE who conduct this paper have already expressed their opinions as to what should be done with the Affirmation Bill. And to what has been said we desire now to add but one thing, namely, that a solemn affirmation is an oath in disguise. If there is no God, there is no solemnity in affirmations or in anything else. An Atheist making a solemn affirmation is like a Christian pronouncing, with the epitaph in Westminster Abbey, that life is a joke. But let that pass. There are passages in Mr. Gladstone's speech which will be acceptable to all Churchmen, whatever may be their opinion of the Bill. We doubt whether there is a living statesman of the first rank anywhere in Europe who has had the courage within the last few years to declare, as Mr. Gladstone declared in the House of Commons on Thursday week, that he believed the loss of religious convictions to be 'the most inexpressible calamity which can fall upon a man or a nation.' This is saying out plainly, for all the world to hear, that a Parliament of Bradlaughs would be a Parliament of ruin. It is true that this is only the verdict of history. But other juries besides Irish ones are sometimes intimidated. Our Mathew Arnolds have prattled of sweetness and light as if morals were a matter of sugar and candies; our Herbert Spencers have discoursed of sociology as if it were a branch of geology; not only sermons in stones, but sermons, preacher, and hearers all stones together; and, most shameful of all, those amongst us who profess and call themselves Christians have been so eaten up with caste and mutual jealousy that our children cannot be taught their duty to God or man, and our legislators dare not legislate in the name of Christ. We, with Mr. Gladstone, are 'not willing that Christianity should be dispensed with.' Kissing the New Testament implies to us, as it does to him, 'an acceptance of the Divine Revelation contained in the New Testament.' And when we speak of God, we mean the God who has revealed Himself in that revelation. There is no other. 'Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father.' But we must go farther. Mathew Arnold might prattle, Herbert Spencer might discourse, and coarser infidel might adapt these gentlemen's refined nothings to the tastes of coarser minds, and yet there might be small danger to the commonwealth if the Christians obeyed Christ. Yet merely to point out that sects are unchristian, and that the New Testament ideal is that ONE CHURCH FOR ONE PLACE, doing in every place the work of Christ's kingdom and order among men, is to expose oneself to a charge of bigotry and ignorance from the Christian world—world, alas! too truly.

What Mr. Gladstone says of Christianity is true of Christianity in all its divine particulars; and the Church, the local Church, the One Church for One Place, built everywhere upon the Apostolic foundation, is one of those particulars. Yet is not every Separatist meeting-house proclaiming every day and every hour to the daily and hourly passers-by, in regard to that visible unity which alone can convert the world, 'That is one of the superfluities; that is one of the excrescences; that has nothing to do with the vital substance; all you have to do is to pronounce the name of Christ?' We Churchmen have to bring back the Christians of this nation to the full and universal

acknowledgment of the One Church, as being more certainly Christ's institution than even the One Bible which is so widely circulated and so narrowly understood. But then let us look within. What Dr. Beyschlag has lately said in Germany of the Church of Rome we may fairly adapt to the case of English Dissent, both Romish and Protestant,—'Has it never occurred to us that the Divine Government of the world has permitted the growth of Dissent over against our historical churches, not as a terrifying monster of anti-Christianity, but a guardian of principles and methods which we have lost or never had, and which are indispensable for that future form of the Christian Church which all people of the earth shall be both enabled and called upon to accept?'—*Church Bells*.

## A GRATIFYING CONTRAST.

The *London Times*, which has so often seemed to delight in saying disagreeable things of the Church, has been forced by the unquestionable and hard logic of facts to speak in this way in a recent article.

If there is one fact more unquestionable than another in the social history of our time, it is that during the past forty years, the clergy have advanced immensely in public esteem. Forty years ago no clever young man who had any self-respect could allow himself to say a good word for the clergy. They were the representatives of a worn-out institution, whose sole *raison d'être* was to provide comfortable places for university graduates and younger sons, and they would inevitably die out with the advance of knowledge and enlightenment. In forty years' knowledge and enlightenment we have advanced a good deal, and here we have 20,000 persons eager to crowd into Canterbury Cathedral to see the Archbishop enthroned. We have in the great towns twice as many Churches as there were then, and those full instead of empty. We have all kinds of social and civilizing agencies set on foot by the parish clergy—no longer on some plan of unworkable and demoralizing benevolence, but on plans that experience has shown to be capable of success. They get hold of the boys and young men for their choirs; their wives—devoted women, who pass their lives in the Eastern wilderness with a cheerfulness rare in Belgravia—do their best to reach the girls and mothers, to keep an eye on the shop assistants and the factory hands, to get them under good influences, and to keep them amused. Self-supporting clubs just started by the clergy, but in no sense maintained by them, are numerous; and there are many clergymen (although this, indeed, is the rock on which they too often split) who cordially support the Board schools. Nor is this devotion to the social needs of their people confined to any one theological school. However irreconcilable in the pulpit, and in their views of the ultimate facts of the universe, Ritualists, and Evangelicals, and Broad Churchmen often enough agree in their social policy. About dogma, there is room for doubt and difference; but when it comes to a question of how young men and women are to be kept from evil ways, and how fathers and mothers are to be enabled to take an interest in their families, the facts of life enforce a practical agreement. The late Mr. Lowder went about his work with a more definite theological bias than Mr. Barnett does; but we should fancy that on questions of the means of

civilization the two would have proceeded on much the same lines. It is well that these things should not be forgotten. When we read in the reports of clerical conferences, or in volumes of published sermons the curious extravagances of thought to which the disputants commit themselves, their ready assumptions, and their intolerance of those who disagree with them, we are too much given to conclude that this, and this only, is what the clergy think and do. At such times it is desirable to look at the reverse of the picture, and against the dogmatism of some to set the patient, zealous lives of so many, the readiness with which they sacrifice all that this world holds dear—wealth, social pleasures, amusement, and even the barest comforts—for the sake of carrying on a life and death struggle with misery and sin.

## C. OF E. TEMPERANCE SOCIETY.

The Annual Meeting of the Church of England Temperance Society was held on April 24th, in the library of Lambeth Palace. The Archbishop of Canterbury presided.

The Report, an abstract of which was read by Mr. Sargent, the Secretary, showed that the Society continues to make great progress, the number of members and the income increasing rapidly. The executive congratulated the members on the decrease of drunkenness and drinking habits among the working classes, and claimed that the Church of England Temperance Society had done something towards achieving such good results. The returns from the various dioceses gave a total of 432,674 members, and in addition there were 12,000 in the Royal Navy, and 24,000 in the merchant service. Special temperance work had been commenced among railway employes, large numbers of whom were enrolling themselves in the Society. The whole work carried on last year involved an expenditure of nearly £23,000.

The Archbishop of Canterbury who was received with much cheering, said the Report of the Society showed a remarkable feature—namely, that by its efforts to promote the welfare of the community it had brought about a decrease in the revenue of the country. There were also other important matters in which a loss might some day accrue to the national finances, to be made up eventually by the greater industry and devotion of the people in supporting their country and its institutions, not by their vices, but by their virtues. The Society would be twenty-one years old on the 2nd of May. He remembered some forty-one years ago seeing a rude lithograph of a Roman Catholic priest addressing a few tattered Irish people, and he recollected, about that time, among his father's workmen there was one who was a convert to the taen novel principle of teetotalism, and consequently, an object of strange and curious wonder, not to say ridicule. Now, after forty years had elapsed, the library of Lambeth Palace was filled from end to end by those who welcomed the fact that temperance was an important branch of the great home mission work of the Church. They were told that in the navy and in the merchant service, and wherever the work was being most actively carried on, there the means of grace were best attended. He hoped also that the same would be true, and that wherever the Church was most active there temperance would most predominate. Great success had attended the Society, and with success came responsibility.