

# The Church Guardian,

A WEEKLY NEWSPAPER, PUBLISHED  
IN THE INTERESTS OF THE  
CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

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## DECLINE OF INFANT BAPTISM AMONG THE PRESBYTERIANS.

The following lamentable lack of bringing children to Baptism among the American Presbyterians, the record of which is taken from the *New York Sun*, does not surprise us. The Westminster Confession contains an admirable statement of doctrine on Baptism. Its language on regeneration, and the benefits of the Sacrament, is stronger, if possible, than our own. But as a general thing, Presbyterians have repudiated their own standards on this as on other points. You will scarcely meet one who will accept the language of the Westminster Confession. When the doctrine is not held, it is not surprising that the practice should fall with it. Baptists, of course, exult over this, but it is due not so much to disbelief in Infant Baptism as to a failure to understand its meaning and importance. To any one who loves to bring little children to Christ in the only way in which they can be brought, the following extract will be read with much pain:—

"It is evident from even a brief study of the statistics of the Presbyterian Church as officially given out by the General Assembly, that infant baptism is not practiced in that denomination to a sufficiently great extent to cause much discomfort, even to those who most earnestly disapprove of it. A glance at the record will astonish many even of the most pronounced Presbyterians. In the Rev. Dr. Hall's magnificent church, in Fifth Avenue, with its membership of 1,730, there were 21 babes baptized last year. In Dr. Crosby's, which numbers 1,351 members, there were only 17. Dr. Beven's brick church, has 1,200 members, but only 23 infants to dedicate in baptism. In Dr. Robinson's Memorial Church, 570 members would show only 8 baptized infants. Across the East River the showing is no better. Talmage has the largest membership in the denomination, numbering 2,471; yet among all this army there were only 49 infants baptized in the Tabernacle. Dr. Cuyler baptized 31 infants in a membership of 1,761. Dr. Ludlow, with 378 members, report 6 infant baptisms. Dr. Van Dyke, with 571, and Brother Crosby, with 336, report no infants baptized. The church at Sag Harbor, which is one of the most prosperous on Long Island, outside of Brooklyn, and has 357 members, has had no infants to baptize. The First church at Buffalo, the Bound Brook (N. J.) church and the First at Princeton, N. J., are similarly lacking in infantile additions to the flock. So with the West Arch street, in Philadelphia, with a membership of 309, and a building which cost \$250,000. All this is a strange comment on the zeal of the people for one of their piously cherished ordinances. Whether it is that babes are not born to those good people, or that there is an habitual neglect to bring them to the baptismal font would be a most interesting subject for pulpit discussion. In the whole Presbyterian Church the infant baptisms for a year averages about three and a half infants to each minister. If the question be asked as to adult baptisms to account for this great shortcoming, the answer from the official record is that they foot up about half as many as those infants."

In marked and striking contrast to this sad disregard of our Blessed Lord's positive command among the Presbyterians, we rejoice to know that a very large and increasing number of Baptisms are performed in our Church, both in England, the United States, and Canada.

We have not the figures for the whole of England, from what we have we can fairly estimate that a million of children and adults receive the Sacrament at the hands of the English Clergy. In the United States, with less than 100,000 communicants, there were nearly 50,000 Baptisms, the five dioceses of the New York having 9810 Infant and 10,000 adults in 1881, while in Canada,

with about 100,000 Communicants, the Baptisms were over 15,000 last year.

To show the wide difference in this matter between the Church and the Presbyterians, according to the *Sun's* figures, it is as well to point out, that to equal the Church in the United States or Canada, the congregations named instead of having 155 Baptisms for the 10,967 members, should have had over 1300 for the year, or nine times more than they had.

### "THE DIOCESE OF ALGOMA."

We clip the accompanying letter from our widely circulated contemporary the *Toronto Mail* of the 23rd ult:—

#### THE DIOCESE OF ALGOMA.

(To the Editor of the Mail.)

SIR,—It is not without a feeling of the most profound respect for the memory of the late Bishop of Algoma that I venture upon calling the earnest attention of the members of our Church in this ecclesiastical province to certain aspects of matters connected with the Diocese of Algoma, which it will be advisable to consider before a successor is named to the office.

When it was proposed to create the missionary Diocese of Algoma, and thus relieve the wealthy Diocese of Toronto of its own legitimate work, wise men shook their heads at an experiment so doubtful, and the subsequent history of the Diocese proves that those who opposed the creation of the missionary Diocese were correct in their views. Churchmen, other than those belonging to the Diocese of Toronto, complain that they were taken in a trap by the Diocese of Toronto, and that the burden of maintaining Algoma was thrown upon them—they unfortunately not being near so wealthy as Toronto—nay more, that the very monies contributed by the other Dioceses for Algoma were used to the extent, at all events, of five per cent. by the Diocese of Toronto for its own purposes.

However, without dwelling upon this, it is manifest that the time has now arrived for "the other Dioceses" to withdraw from this mistaken missionary enterprise. There are two obvious courses which suggest themselves:—

1. Re-absorption into the Diocese of Toronto; or
2. The creation of an independent Diocese of Algoma.

Some considerable progress has been made in settlement, and the prospects for the future are not by any means bad, so that the difficulties in either case are not formidable. Should the second course be determined upon, it seems only reasonable that a section of productive territory should be added to Algoma from the existing Diocese of Toronto. There are so many strong believers in the benefits of episcopacy in the Diocese of Toronto that I am sure they will not hesitate to help forward the scheme. We have in the ecclesiastical province some clergy of large private means, and even larger zeal for the Church, who would not hesitate to accept the work for the world's sake. It is not needful that party theology should be imported into the selection, and in that case—subject to his willingness to accept—the Rev. Charles Hamilton, M. A., of St. Matthew's Church, Quebec, would be an admirable appointment, combining as he does numerous qualities calculated to ensure success. Commending this subject to the consideration of the members of the Church,

Yours, &c.,

AMICUS.

Dec. 19, 1881.

In reference to the above letter, we may say that the matter is one which ought to be pressed on the attention of the Church. We have stated our views on this subject in a previous editorial. As to "re-absorption into the Diocese of Toronto," we hardly think that Churchmen will consent to see a Diocese once organized taken back again into Toronto. Such a course would indicate failure, and would throw discredit on the labours of the late Bishop of Algoma. The creation of an independent Diocese with part of Toronto attached would be a better plan. Some steps should be at once taken to provide for the endowment of the Episcopate. "Amicus" puts forward the name of the Rev. Charles Hamilton, of Quebec. No better man could be chosen. But it is a mistake to call for the clergy of private means to accept the work for the world's sake. It lowers the Church to allow individuals to do what is the duty of the whole Church. Let Algoma be placed on a proper financial basis; let the support of the Bishop be assured, and then let a suitable man be chosen. We should rejoice to see such a man as Mr. Hamilton appointed. His admirable qualifications are well known, and if he could be induced to accept the position, the widowed Diocese would be indeed fortunate. But first let the Church in Canada arouse to her duty in this matter and endow the Bishopric. Then the Synod will feel free to make a selection.

THE Bishop of Fredericton has addressed a letter to his clergy on the subject of petitioning Parliament against the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill, which will be introduced the coming Session. We direct attention to it, and also to the first of a series of letters on the same subject from the able pen of Prof. Roe, of Bishop's College, Lennoxville.

### THE S. P. C. K. ALMANACK.

Surely the compilers of the S. P. C. K. Almanack might find some one to give them accurate information about the Colonial and American Bishops. Every year we note the same inaccuracies, with additions. It would be a very simple matter to obtain a correct list of the Bishops; and ignorance about the colonies on the part of a Society which has so much to do with them is almost unpardonable. We note, for instance, that in the list of American Bishops the name of Bishop Atkinson, of North Carolina, is again inserted, though he has been dead for some time, and Bishop Lyman is put in as his assistant. Bishop Kerfoot, of Pittsburgh, is dead. The Missionary Bishops of Washington and Montana—Dr. Paddock and Dr. Dunlap—are omitted altogether. Bishop Scarborough is put down as the Assistant Bishop instead of the Bishop of New Jersey.

Under the heading of North America, there is no notice taken of the fact that there are two Ecclesiastical Provinces—one of Canada and one of Rupert's Land—one independent group of Dioceses in British Columbia, and one independent Diocese, Newfoundland. The name of Bishop Kingdon is not inserted, though he was consecrated months before the Almanack went to press.

Other inaccuracies might be noted. With these exceptions, the "Churchman's Almanack" is a valuable little publication; and as it circulates in every Anglican Diocese in the world, we are all the more anxious to have it correct.

### HAS THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND LOST ITS HOLD UPON THE AGE?

(Continued.)

#### CATHEDRALS.

From the Clergy to the Churches the transition is natural. The Cathedrals of these days are like the Bishops, centres of Church life and work. Time was and that within our own memories too, when they were not so; when a small part of their vast enclosure, just the choir, was used for worship; the rest, a waste of "long drawn aisles and fretted vaults," served as a promenade for non-worshippers and sight-seers. A great and good change those noble buildings have undergone. Screen and partition have disappeared; their entire floor being covered with seats and filled with worshippers. Noble soul-inspiring services those when the courts of the Lord's House are thronged, when the voice of praise is like the sound of many waters, when the pure Word of God is preached to listening thousands. Never does the vast Cathedral, named after the Apostle of the Gentiles, look so grand and glorious as when its mighty dome covers the heads of 5,000 worshippers, as when it echoes the very sounds of the Gospel that St. Paul preached.

"I have labored to make the Abbey a great centre of national religious life," these were among the last words of Westminster's late lamented Dean. How far did he succeed? Consult for an answer that solemn and affecting scene in "the great temple of silence and reconciliation." Gathered about his bier are the representatives of all classes of society, and of all sections of the Christian Church; and every hand of every class and section, from the Sovereign to the son of toil, from the Episcopalian to the close Baptist, casts a flowery wreath upon his coffin, who in life had been a great apostle of universal love.

Without stopping to mention particular examples it may be said in a general way that the all-important subject of Cathedral reform, so long a subject of debate and discussion only, has now assumed a practical shape; and if those establishments, long looked upon as most faulty and lazy, have awakened to a sense of duty and responsibility, this is in itself a happy indication that a like advance in zeal marks the entire breadth of the Church.

This, indeed, will be apparent to every one who takes the trouble to examine the matter for himself under a few wider words such as these following:—

#### CHURCH BUILDING AND EXTENSION.

During the present century 9,000 churches have been built, rebuilt, or restored in England, costing eighteen millions of pounds sterling, or ninety millions of dollars, all of which, save one million pounds granted by Parliament, was contributed by Churchmen. During the last ten years one hundred and thirty churches have been erected in London alone, out of the Bishop of London's fund.

### SUB-DIVISION OF PARISHES.

In 1831 the Parliamentary Enquiry Commission returned the number of benefices in England at 10,000; now they are 13,200—showing an increase of 3,200 within the last half century. Every one of these new parishes involved a large voluntary outlay for church, schools, parsonage, and every one had also to be endowed. It is computed that Churchmen have given for such endowment at the rate of one hundred and twenty thousand pounds a year for the last three years.

#### PARSONAGE HOUSES AND CLERGY.

Forty years ago parsonages in England numbered 5,900; now they are over 11,000 in number—showing a gain of over 5,000 resident clergy. In 1801 the number of clergy in England was 10,307; in 1871 it had risen to 20,694—more than double the number within three-quarters of a century.

#### EDUCATION.

The same wonderful increase in the Church's activity is observable in the important department of education. The following figures are taken from the Report of the Privy Council for 1873, covering a period of thirty years last past. Subscribed for building Church Schools in England and Wales, £3,585,000. Here we have three and a half millions—the money of Church people—sunk in buildings alone; while from the same Report we learn that the annual subscriptions of Churchmen amount to three hundred and eighty-nine thousand pounds, against eighty-four thousand subscribed by Nonconformists, to the cause of Christian education.

It ought to be evident to every fair-minded person that, not alone in these several departments of her work proper, is the Anglican Church most anxious to be faithful and zealous; but as well in all movements of a public and social character, she is ready to take the lead in shining for the people's good.

#### TEMPERANCE.

Thus we have "The Church of England Temperance Society," having its agents and branches on this continent, a most powerful and useful organization, because established upon a Scriptural and rational basis; eschewing fanaticism, and seeking to employ all Christian men in the great business of persuading their fellows to "live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world."

#### SUNDAY SCHOOL INSTITUTE.

We have also "The Church of England Sunday School Institute" teaching us all how best to manage our Sunday Schools, how best to teach the children of the Church, to feed Christ's lambs with sound and wholesome food, brought down to the level of their capacities, and rendered interesting as well as instructive both to teachers and children.

#### S. P. C. K. AND OTHER SOCIETIES.

In close connexion with this sort of work, we have long enjoyed the labors of the Christian Knowledge Society, or combination of societies, as it might be truly called, for it includes the Church Bible and Prayer Book Society; the Church Tract and Pure Literature Society; a Church Education Society; a Home Mission Society; a Church School and Building Society; a Church Endowment Society, and a Society for training a native Ministry. I refer more particularly to the work accomplished in nourishing the young minds of the Church by wholesome literature, supplying all Sunday School requisites from the Catechism to the Library; and afterwards by seeking to uproot the seeds of scepticism, where unhappily at a later age they may have taken root, through the publication and cheap sale of the standard apologetic works of the Church, and as particularly adapted to this generation, the works of the Christian Evidence Society.

If evil men and seducers wax worse and worse, if they are diligent to unite and publish in cheap form, it is some comfort to know that the Church too is alive to the necessities of the hour, and is ever ready to counteract the evils caused by a free and licentious press. And what shall I more say of her societies and institutions for the public good? In the *Churchman's Almanack* you may read a list of some thirty-five of these; and this is a proof more positive, than many pages could supply that in these last days, the Anglican Church is freely spending her money, and the best learning and labor of her sons, that she may stand in the forefront, wherever and whenever it may be necessary to roll back the advancing flood of vice, or to promote the good, social, moral, and religious of the people of the earth.

(To be Concluded.)