

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.

Vol. IV.—No. 21.]

HALIFAX. WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 1882. WINNIPEG.

[One Dollar and a Half a Year.]

THE FINANCIAL QUESTION IN THE CHURCH.

The article entitled "Another Aspect of the Financial Question in the Church," by Mr. Samuel Wagner, in the July number of *The American Church Review*, is in part a reply to the late Rev. Dr. Craik.

Here the argument is, that by Divine ordinance, the money requisite for the support of the Church should be secured by methods which may be called taxation, and which are in fact adopted in the administration of a State. This, as a general proposition, we gladly concede, for it is the foundation of the whole argument of the Free Church advocate. But, what shall be taxed? That is the permanent question. The only Divine ordinance on this subject ever given to man, taxed man's possessions and man's income. All national, State, and municipal laws of taxation do the same, in one form or another. But a pew-rent does not tax a man's means or income; on the contrary, it distinctly taxes the privileges of worship. Let us look at this more closely. God's ordinance of the tithe declares that a tenth part of all that a man receives from the fruits of the land, from his labor, and from the income of his possessions, shall be yielded up. That is taxation pure and simple. But can Dr. Craik show us any instance where, by Divine ordinance, a tax has been imposed upon God's worship, or any other of the privileges He has vouchsafed to man? On the contrary, was not one of the very objects of the tithe to make sure that the inestimable privileges of worship should certainly be made available to all. Or, let us look at it as we see it in the family and in the State. Would it ever occur to any father of a household to impose a tax upon each chair at the family table, or to a national, State or municipal government to impose an annual tax upon a certain number of citizens for the exclusive privilege of crossing the public street or entering the public buildings? What would be thought of a system of taxation by which a city should raise a revenue for maintaining a park by renting out to certain individuals the exclusive right to drive over its roads, walk upon its paths, or occupy its rustic seats? Taxing the privileges of occupying seats in churches is therefore not legitimate taxation according to either Divine or human methods, but is simply the bargaining for a privilege in favor of one person to the exclusion of another.

Here is an old bachelor worth five millions—perhaps more. How much pew-rent is he to pay? Is he to be examined as to his income, and made to pay a proper proportion of it, or is he to pay the same as his next-door neighbor, who works very hard to support his large family, all of whom happen to be very fond of coming to church? Who is to decide this difficult and very delicate question? Or, if once decided, by what human device can be extracted from him in the form of pew-rent a sum of money representing his proper share, in proportion to his wealth, of the money needed to support the Church? Give him one of the largest and best situated pews in the church, and he could be charged no higher price per annum for it than any one else would be willing to pay for the same pew, or than other pews equally eligible would command. It is very clear that, under any system of pew rents, a price must be set upon each pew, and each one must be rented

to any one willing, to pay the price. For if no price were put upon the pews, but a rental charged in each case according to the means of the tenant or occupant, that would be a complete abandonment of the whole system; for the tax would then be upon the individual, according to his ability, and not upon the seats in the church, which is precisely the doctrine of the advocates of free churches.

If pew rents are to be retained, it unquestionably does rest upon the advocates of that system to show that this human invention is better than God's law, and to demonstrate to the people of the enlightened nineteenth century, that a device which was forced upon the Church in the dark days of Puritanism, and which, like some other Puritan notions, has clung to it with more or less tenacity ever since, is an improvement upon God's own ordinance, established from the beginning and unalterable for all time.

THE WORLD WITHOUT THE GOSPEL.

Reflect what kind of a world this was when the disciples of Christ undertook to reform it, and compare it with the condition in which their teachings have put it. In its mighty metropolis, the centre of its intellectual and political power, the best men were addicted to vices so debasing that I could not even allude to them without soiling the paper I write upon. All manner of unprincipled wickedness was practiced in the private life of the whole population without concealment or shame, and the magistrates were thoroughly and universally corrupt. Benevolence in any shape was altogether and universally unknown. The helpless and the weak got neither justice nor mercy. There was no relief for the poor, no succor for the sick, no refuge for the unfortunate. In all pagandom there was not a hospital, asylum, alms house, or organized charity of any sort. The indifference to human life was literally frightful. The order of a successful leader to assassinate his opponents was always obeyed by his followers with the utmost alacrity and pleasure. It was a special amusement of the populace to witness the shows at which men were compelled to kill one another, to be tormented by wild beasts, or otherwise "butchered to make a Roman holiday." In every province paganism enacted the same cold blooded cruelties—oppression and robbery ruled supreme; murder went rampaging and red over all the earth.

The church came, and the light penetrated this darkness like a new sun. She covered the globe with institutions of mercy, and thousands upon thousands of her disciples devoted themselves exclusively to works of charity at the sacrifice of every earthly interest. Her earliest adherents were killed without remorse—beheaded, crucified, sawn asunder, thrown to the beasts, or covered with pitch piled up in great heaps, and slowly burnt to death. But her faith was made perfect through suffering, and the law of love rose in triumph from the ashes of her martyrs. This religion has come down to us through the ages, attended all the way by righteousness, temperance, mercy, transparent truthfulness, exulting hope, and white winged charity. Never was its influence for good more plainly perceptible than now. It has not converted, purified and reformed all men, for its first principle is the freedom of the human will, and

there are those who choose to reject it. But to the mass of mankind, directly and indirectly, it has brought uncounted benefits and blessings. Abolish it—take away the restraints which it imposes on evil passions—silence the admonitions of its preachers—let all Christians cease their labors of charity—blot out from history the records of its heroic benevolence—repeal the laws it has enacted and the institutions it has built up—let its moral principles be abandoned and all its miracles of light be extinguished—what would we come to! I need not answer this question; the experiment has been partially tried. The French nation formally renounced Christianity, denied the existence of the Supreme Being, and so satisfied the hunger of the infidel heart for a time. What followed? Universal depravity, garments rolled in blood, fantastic crimes unimagined before, which startled the earth with their sublime atrocity. People have and ought to have no special desire to follow that terrible example of guilt and misery. —*Judge Black, in North American Review.*

THE EGYPT OF PROPHECY.

PERHAPS some of your readers may be interested in being reminded that Egypt can never become an independent kingdom with its own monarch; for it is written in Ezekiel xxix. 15—"It shall be the basest of the kingdoms;" and in Ezekiel xxx. 13—"And there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt." It is now a great deal above 2,000 years since this prophecy was first delivered; and what likelihood or appearance was there that the Egyptians should for so many ages bow under a foreign yoke, and never in all that time be able to recover their liberties and have a prince of their own to reign over them? In Egypt the human mind had made some of its earliest and most auspicious efforts. It was long the general opinion that there the laws of society had been discovered, and the fountains of science opened. Unquestionably that ingenious people were very early distinguished by an ardent spirit of enterprise and a peculiar happiness of invention. The stupendous monuments of art which lie scattered over the banks of the Nile attest the vastness of their designs and extent of their power. The earliest professors of literature, and the first founders of civil polity in Europe, and in the more western provinces of Asia, travelled into Egypt, and there acquired a knowledge of the fundamental principles of science and government. Egypt was possessed likewise of natural advantages which could seldom fail. Its situation was singularly calculated to defend it against the attacks of foreign invaders, whilst its uncommon fruitfulness promised to secure the country which it enriched from poverty, baseness, and subjection. Yet, after a long course of grandeur, and in contradiction to its natural advantages, Ezekiel pronounced that "the kingdom should be the basest of kingdoms," and "that there should be no more a prince in the land of Egypt." As is the prophecy so is the event; for not long afterwards Egypt was conquered by the Babylonians, and after the Babylonians by the Persians, and after the Persians it became subject to the Macedonians, and after the Macedonians to the Romans, and after the Romans to the Saracens, and then to the Mamelukes, and now it is a province of the Ottoman Empire. (See *Notes to Holy Bible*, S. P. C. K.)—*Cor. London Guardian.*