

The Church Guardian.

Upholds the Doctrines and Rubrics of the Prayer



"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.

ACTIVITY OF THE CHURCH IN ENGLAND.—We take the following resume from an article with the above heading in our excellent English contemporary *Church Bells*. The activity of the Mother Church ought to stir up her daughter churches to a more earnest and persistent emulation of her abundant good works:

The Church of England is not satisfied with raising buildings and performing sacred rites within them: but, as will be seen in what follows, she is always applying herself to carry out fully and completely all things whatsoever her hand findeth to do. Churchmen, a few years ago, saw the need of extending the Home Episcopate; and already five new dioceses have been founded and endowed, and two others are in process of endowment—the total cost up to now being 420,000*l.* The need for occasionally stirring up the 'dry bones' of a parish was no sooner pointed out than Churchmen found the means for forming a Parochial Mission Society; and now the record of 'missions' held in a single year fills five pages of the *Year-book* over and above the seventeen pages devoted to the record of the recent London Mission. The real importance and value of employing lay-helpers in religious work was recognized only a very few years ago; but already there are Lay-Helpers' Associations established in several dioceses, besides Scripture-readers' Societies in abundance. The spiritual destitution of many large towns and scattered country parishes had only to be known to Churchmen in other parts, and very soon two central Societies, followed by numerous 'Bishops' Funds,' were founded to cope with the evil. The need of definite preparation for Holy Orders began to be felt some forty or fifty years ago: now there are fifteen distinctively theological colleges, in which last year four hundred or more students were being trained for their after clerical-work. It would, however, be endless to set out in detail all the useful undertakings which Churchmen find time and money for carrying on. Let this list be pondered over:—Missions to Seamen, the Water-side Mission, Thames Church Mission, Reformatories, Refuges, Industrial Schools, Penitentiaries, Friendless Girls' Homes, Homes for Waifs and Strays, Sisterhoods, Orphanages, Deaconesses' Institutions, Nursing Institutions, Cottage Hospitals, Convalescent Homes, Hospitals, &c.; add to all these various works the work of Elementary Education, Sunday Schools, Diocesan Inspection of Religious Knowledge, Book Societies, Home and Foreign Missions, Choral Associations, Bell-ringers' Associations, Guilds, Clubs, Institutes; note, further, how Church life is quickened and directed by means of Retreats, Diocesan Conferences, the Central Council, and the Convocations; and it will not need another word of argument to establish the fact that the Church of the present day is not only full of, but overflowing with, useful activity.

CHURCH REFORM.—At the recent meeting of the Convocation of Canterbury, the Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol brought forward a memorial on the subject of Church Reform, and moved for the appointment of a committee of

the whole House to draw up a report on the subject.

The Bishop of Peterborough, in seconding the motion, said that he had no sympathy with the crude and doctrinaire schemes of reform, of which their lordships had, with himself, heard so much. He wished it to be known abroad that the question of Church Reform was not begotten of the panic of the last few months, as was supposed. The question, on the contrary, had occupied the attention of the rulers of the Church for a long time, and it was right to get rid of the idea of reform being brought in to stave off the idea of Disestablishment. Panic legislation was the worst of all legislation, and it was therefore most desirable that they should avoid anything approaching to it. His lordship maintained that it was not real danger, but the attention paid to this question, which had given it prominence. As a member of the oldest democracy, the Church of Christ, he was not afraid of democracy. It was for the Church to see to the spiritual interests and religious feelings of the masses of this country. They wanted something between the Nonconformist power of the congregation to drive out good men and their own power to drive out bad men. He would give the laity power to legislate in the Church, for there was a difference between legislation and administration. There was already a power given to the laity in Parliament to legislate, but not to administer. Some of the proposals for Church Reform were crazes. It was absurd to think that over 200 sects existing in England could be united under a flapping and flabby umbrella to be called the United Church. He protested most strongly against allowing the clergy to preach heresy by proxy by inviting Nonconformist ministers to occupy pulpits of the Church of England, and to utter tenets which those in charge who gave the invitation dared not preach themselves for fear of penalties.

THE ENGLISH HOUSE OF LAYMEN.—This new consultative body formed of delegates elected by the Lay communicants of the various dioceses of the Province of Canterbury met for the first time on the day of the opening of Convocation. There was a large attendance, including many of the most prominent and influential men of the realm. The Archbishop of Canterbury delivered the opening address, from which we give the following extracts:

It is with a grave sense of the significance of this occasion, and with a well grounded confidence in the advantage of your counsels, through the will of God, to the development of the active work and spiritual life of the Church of England, that I now open in His Name this House of Laymen elected for the Province of Canterbury. Answering to the expansion of interest, and the increase of self-denying labour and generosity on the part of the laity of the Church in advancing towards the noble ends set before her by her Master and Head, there has for many years existed a fixed desire on the part of the Bishops, and most of the clergy, to secure in some definite manner, God helping us, a large measure of regular deliberation and counsel from able and devout laymen. To the due consideration of many modern problems,

the opinion of the laity and the opinion of the clergy are alike essential. Neither by itself covers the ground. Laymen bring to bear on these problems, every-day experiences and sentiments out of every class; a quick perception of social change; a persuasion that spiritual work which claims to deal with the nature of man should take cognizance of all such change, and ignore no fact; they bring habits of association for large purposes, fertility of resource, suggestiveness as to overcoming difficulties, or as to approaching them from new sides. Clergymen are by education and life observant of, and will assuredly maintain, that unbroken thread of faith administration which comes to us from the divine beginnings of our religion, and of their mission, and which it is essential to the very idea of the Church to preserve in integrity, and freshly illustrate from age to age. Each, therefore, gives to the other scope and strength, distinct theory, and working ideas. It is especially in regard to our most serviceable organizations, and to those legislative need which have necessarily increased in proportion to the activity of the Church's vital and spiritual energies, that the desire for lay counsel has been manifested. This desire has gathered strength for many years past from the experience of that counsel as it has been afforded in the diocesan and various other conferences. The Convocation of Canterbury has now, after much careful discussion, requested the Bishops in each diocese of the province to call upon the lay members of their several conferences, who are themselves all elected by the laity of the parishes, to elect a House of Laymen in fulfilment of the long-cherished hope. This House is, therefore, a body purely representative of the laity, and its realization at this day, with simpler, freer, larger aims than those of faction or political party, is full of strong and happy promise. The moral effect of its discussions must from the first be great; and we cannot doubt that, if its conclusions are arrived at by patient debate in fully attended meetings, the moral effect will in due time take material and practical form.

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The consultative bodies of laymen which are now to be found in all branches of the Anglican Communion carry us back long ages, to the time when before the Italian Church overrode all such promises, St. Cyprian promised the faithful laity that he would without their assent do nothing. With us in England the Bishops derive in part, as of old, their position and the recognition of their authority from the voice and suffrage of the laity, and therefore we especially ought to welcome your consensus. A Church which refers all to primitive standards is well able in the conduct of affairs to pursue primitive principle in forms which our own century can understand and use. That it may be so we need among us a spirit uninfluenced by agitation and party; we need temperate proposals, a considerate candour and calm discussions. We need a united self-surrender to what we can discern of the purpose of the Divine Head of the Church. May then our God, who has been the ever-present guide of our Church through so many crisis, and has renewed her from age to age in courage and effectiveness, so also in our own time brighten and intensify her living fires of energy and of love.