

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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INCONSISTENCIES.

All Christians believe that the Holy Spirit does in some enlighten and lead believers; but it is in such an indefinite ways to render us altogether unconscious of the fact. How absurdly inconsistent as well as unscriptural is such an attitude.

Here is a teacher who teaches us, and yet of whose presence we are utterly unconscious; a Guide who leads us, and yet we may not say, *I know* I am being led of God; a Helper whose help we may not confess with confidence; a Comforter who abides with us, and yet we may not *know* it; the "Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God," but we may not say, *I have that witness*, and *I know I am a child of God*. "Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts," but we are presumptuous if we confess to any *certainty* on this point—we are in a very "unhealthy" spiritual state if we do so. Surely a position involving such contradictions is unworthy of thoughtful men.

Ah me! how few of God's dear children appreciate their glorious privilege under this Dispensation of the Spirit. Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty; there is joy; there is peace; there is victory over the world, the flesh and the Devil. And yet the vast majority of Christians are utterly unconscious of the "liberty wherewith Christ maketh his people free." They are bondage to the Letter; in bondage to Tradition; in bondage to Fear; in bondage to Sin more or less; and this, in great measure, because they have been taught not to look for confidence as to their spiritual condition not to look for an inward illumination and guidance. Doubt on this point is even exalted to a virtue—it is regarded most as a "healthy sign of reaction from emotional religion"—a praiseworthy humility. Well, doubt of one's self is indeed a virtue; but doubt—as such doubt implies—of our Lord, of his promise, his presence, his grace, his power is most surely not a virtue, but one of the greatest sins of which a believer can be guilty.

Let us then beware how we seek to steady the ark of God by profanely touching that which alone clothes it with awful sanctity. And let us seek—as indeed we sadly need—a return to the heroic faith of the old times, when men dared to believe that God dwelt in them; when they gave themselves up with confidence—tongue and pen and feet—to the movements of the Holy Ghost; when they hesitated not, on every extremity, to throw themselves with a grand trust upon the infinite resources of Him who spake to them in the "still small voice"—"the God that answers by fire let him be God;" when the very heavens were opened to the daring inquisition of their faith, and visions of God came to the pure in heart.

Then shall there come to the Church a manhood at once beautiful and strong; then shall we be established in a glorious confidence; then shall we stand in a divine uprightness which never falters; then shall we walk erect and free of Freemen Christ and Sons of God.—*J. E. W., in Church Helper.*

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION.

The Bishop of Michigan, in delivering the second of the series of *Christian Education*, said:

It is religious education, or catechising, that our Saviour means. And it is individual disciplining, or gathering in one by one, not by tribes or nations.

More than one attempt has been made to impose Christianity on a nation. But little success has attended such efforts to evangelize, and they have resulted in inevitable reaction. In a matter in which the Church has such vital interest it cannot be indifferent, and it leads to an enquiry into the relation of Christianity to civil society in the matter of education.

There can be no question as to the right of every human being to education, for it grows out of that primal institution—marriage, which was intended not only to perpetuate but to educate. This duty rests primarily on the parents, who cannot delegate it to either civil society or to the Church.

The parents must educate the child, and on this obligation to educate their off-spring rests the indissolubility of marriage. Of course as the proper training of children affects the State, education is a public concern. But in regard to State schools, or "free schools," the question at once arises as to the duty of teaching religion, whether it belongs to the State or the Church.

If to the State, then the State has the power to determine what is religion. Education has been committed to the State as a mere conventional arrangement. It has its advantages and its disadvantages. First, it is exclusive of worship. The ideal common school is a Christian school. Is it safe, is it right to entrust to the State schools from which worship is excluded? The family should not abdicate to the schools. Christianity did not initiate the duty. It found it in existence. But the special duty of the Church is to disciple. The difficulty is a formal, unspiritual, indifferent Church. We should not fall into the error of having the clergy absorbed in secular education. They are not to be schoolmasters but ministers, to catechize, preach.

THE TITHE QUESTION.

I quote the following from *The Interior*, "Our contributors are debating the tithe question. It is a very Banquo's ghost in the Church life. It gets its chief interest from human meanness. It is interesting because it keeps prominent the question, how little can we give to the Lord and do our whole duty." Now I know you don't mean this. Why? Because it is not like you, nor like *The Interior*, to place the stigma of "meanness" upon the motives of perhaps one-fifth of the pastors of the Presbyterian church, and a large and constantly increasing number of its membership. You say "it keeps prominent the question how little we can give to the Lord." The fact is, there is no "giving" about it. It is payment. A man don't give his tithe, he pays it, and pays it because he owes it. He "gives" only after the tenth has been paid. The obligation of a debt rests upon him until the tenth has been paid, then he is free to give.

I do not need to criticise your illustrations. They don't fit, or if they fit anybody, they apply to those who reject God's claim for any definite proportion of their income, and insist on calling everything they do for Christ or his cause a "gift," and then gauging the gift by their own selfishness. Ask pastors the chief objection their people make to paying the tenth. They will tell you that at least nine-tenths claim that they "cannot afford it." Statistics may show, as they do show, exactly the contrary. They show that those who tithed their income, without exception, state that after trying it they found that they were more prosperous than

before. In short, they learn by experience that God's promise on this subject are literally true; yet no matter, they refuse to be convinced.

MORE FREEDOM.

In an article with reference to the condition and prospects of the Church of England, the *Times* has the following:

"The fact is Disestablishment has for all practical purposes been effected, and it has now become an absolute necessity to remove the lingering accidents of the old arrangements which remain to burden and oppress the Church. These are chiefly four—(1) the legal right of persons who have repudiated their religious duties and have excommunicated themselves, to claim the privileges which belong only to the Churchmen of good standing; (2) the claim of the Crown to appoint Bishops, deans and canons; (3) the impediments which are put in the way of enforcing so much discipline as would enable the Church to exclude persons who are leading from her altars scandalous lives; and (4) the impediments put by the State in the way of exercising synodical rights. There are two ways in which these wrongs can be yet righted. One which would have become inevitable if the Church Association had not been defeated, would have been by the confiscation of all ecclesiastical property, or a least of all that had been inherited from the past. The other is by the gradual revindication of rights of which the Church has been deprived; and this mode can be adopted now that the cause of strife between schools of thought has been taken away. We have nothing to do but to perfect the system of Diocesan Conferences, and make it clear that the central Council is entitled to speak the mind of Churchmen and the thing will be done. He would be a bold minister that would gratuitously disoblige the Wesleyan Conference; and the Central Council, when it has fairly won its spurs, will be a very different kind of champion to attack."

UNITARIAN CHANGE OF BASE.

The dismay which pervaded the ranks of the Unitarians through the statements of one of their Ministers, Dr. Ellis, has not yet been allayed.

Dr. Ellis publicly stated in writing that "Scripture, Exegesis, Logic and argument are on the side of the Orthodox, and that the Bible, strictly interpreted, yields what is called the Orthodox Creed."

Twelve Unitarian Ministers protested against this statement. But its author has re-iterated, and in doing so, takes the opportunity of 'returning my grateful appreciation to the multitude of brethren and friends who have written to me such earnest expressions of full accordance with my address before the Unitarian Club, without raising any exception to any part of it.' And now the *Christian Register*, the organ of the Denomination, states the present position of the discussion in these very plain terms: "Unitarianism has abandoned the Biblical defence, and take higher and more comprehensive ground. Formerly, the Bible was the test of truth; now, Truth must be the test of the Bible." Dr. Ellis says, "the Bible is against us." Then says the *Register*, so much the worst for the Bible.

This a sad development of unbelief. But what would Channing have said?