

was not made before the prorogation of Parliament; it will be, immediately upon its reassembling)—is by Mr. Thomas Duncomb, and is to “transfer the freehold of the parish churches and churchyards from the parsons to the representatives of the parish;” in other words, the church is to become the property of the parish, and the parishioners would then be able to let it, as they thought fit. This motion, it is evident, is intended to meet the argument used by the defenders of the rate, that churches are public property, and ought to be kept in repair and provided for out of the public purse, equally with any other public building. It says, “If churches are indeed public property, and to be maintained by the public, then let the public have the control of them, and use them as they shall think will best realize the end of their establishment.” It is impossible to dispute the logical fairness of this; and if those who used the plea were really sincere in it, they could not object to the proposal. The only end, however, that it will serve, will be to expose the hollowness of the arguments used by the defenders of the rate, and to compel them to shift their ground to some equally untenable position. Verily, the advocates of a bad cause have no enviable task.

It is some time since we noticed the Chinese war. We commented upon its origin as being disgraceful to England, as being unprovoked and tyrannical. No amount of success can alter anterior facts; and that England has been successful—that she has occupied Canton, demolished the Pei-ho forts, and finally concluded a peace advantageous to herself and her ally, does not change our opinion one whit as to the sinfulness of the war. Let us thank God that it is concluded; that the weak have yielded to the strong, and that by any means the destruction of human life is at an end. There is one thing peculiarly gratifying in the announcement of the peace. It is this: that it was the first regular message conveyed by the Atlantic Telegraph; that after the compliments, congratulations, and interchange of courtesies had ended, the first message to be made public flashed along the wires was one of peace. Let us accept it as an omen of good; let us hope that it is indicative of the inauguration of a new era—new, unhappily, in practice on earth, but old as the everlasting hills in the intentions of our Maker: “Peace on earth; good will to men.” We are yet without the particulars of the treaty; but we are told in general terms that “the ports are open, the free exercise of the Christian religion allowed, the establishment of consuls admitted, as also the sending of diplomatic agents to Peking if necessary. France and England have, moreover, obtained a considerable pecuniary indemnity.” No one is sanguine enough to suppose that the Chinese question is thus permanently settled. If current reports respecting Lord Elgin’s intentions are correct, there is one point which must be fatal to hopes of permanent peace—*He is determined to have the opium trade legalized*; and the whole course of that traffic has been so marked by deceit and violence, that even were it not a curse to the Chinese, we could not hope for peace and good will to flow from its establishment by law. Let us pray that He who can, and frequently does, bring good out of evil, may overrule even this grievous wrong to the everlasting well-being of the myriads of China.

An attempt to introduce the practice of Confession into the English Church, by a few of the extreme Tractarian party, is causing considerable excitement just now. The authors of the movement seem to be as deficient in delicacy and decency as they are in sound scriptural Christianity. There is, happily, little chance of their making many converts, for the great body of the members of the English Church have a wholesome dread of any popish practices of that ilk. We are pleased to see that a lady has taken the lead in exposing and denouncing one of the latest instances of enforced confession. That is fitting; for the practice cannot exist to any extent, without a corresponding degradation and enslavement of the female sex.

MONUMENT TO THE WIGTOWN MARTYRS.—There are few in Scotland not familiar with the story of Margaret M’Lauchlan and Margaret Wilson, the two heroic maidens who some century and a half ago suffered martyrdom in the tidal waters