

# 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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## ECCLESIASTICAL NOTES.

It is very encouraging to notice the increased life that is being displayed in the different parishes this Lent. Lenten Pastorals have been issued drawing attention to the season, and offering hints for better living. An increased number of services has been started, and in many places, we are glad to see that a daily service is announced for Lent. On all sides there are healthy signs of increasing love for the plan of the Church's system set forth in the Prayer Book.

ONE reason why older preachers are not wanted is that they have ceased to grow. They have no new acquisitions. They are interested in no new themes. They preach out of memory, instead of uttering fresh and kindling thoughts in words electric with life. It is manna gathered fresh every morning, not the dried article, that people relish. They understand the difference between newly gathered ideas and the canned variety. It is not true that preachers are rejected merely because they have passed middle life. Many of the most popular and admired preachers of the modern pulpit are no longer young in years. But in every instance they are young in feeling, and in full sympathy with the young life of the world. They have kept their youth while adding to it the knowledge and experience of age. There is no other profession in which it is so important to keep young to the last as the ministry. Of course, the liturgy of our Church should always be the true rallying point for Churchmen; but, a man who has lost all his freshness, and prefers to be as he was thirty or forty years before cannot keep the love for the liturgy alive in the breasts of his congregations.

THE Rev. Canon Wilberforce, speaking at a temperance meeting recently in Canterbury, said that just before General Gordon stated, as he believed, for the Congo, he sent to a religious gathering over which the Canon was presiding, asking for the prayers of those assembled.—He said in his letter, "I would rather have the prayers of that little company gathered in your house to-day than I would have the wealth of the Soudan placed at my disposal. Pray for me that I may have humility and the guidance of God, and that all spirit of murmuring may be rebuked in me." When he reached London on his return from Brussels, and his destination was changed, the General sent the Canon another message: "Offer thanks at your next prayer meeting. When I was upborne on the hearts of those Christians I received from God the spiritual blessing that I wanted, and I am now calmly resting in the current of His will."

CANON FARRAR said the other day: "In spite of all the polish and all the philosophy of the Chinese, so common to this day is infanticide that one main work of the Mission Sisters of Mercy is to save the life of infants flung out to die; and only a year or two ago a French nobleman found seven dead children in a short morning walk in the environs of Canton."

A correspondent to the *Scottish Guardian* mentions the following singular fact in connection with Dr. Bonar's hymns:—Many of your readers must be acquainted with the hymns of that sweet singer,

Dr. H. Bonar. He has written them for over 30 years, and they have been sung in churches all over the globe, yet it was only last Sabbath they were used for the first time in his own church at Edinburgh, and with what result? One of his office-bearers rose and left the Church because of this innovation. That such things should be credible in this enlightened age! Dr. Bonar is Moderator of the Free Church this year." We ourselves are aware of a case not fifty miles from Public where a lady parishioner wrote to her clergyman objecting to a Communion hymn in our *Church Hymnal* by Dr. Bonar, on the score of its being ritualistic.

THERE is a great deal of jealousy among otherwise good men. They see others occupying positions which they would like to fill, but to which they are not called; and this, instead of prompting them to qualify themselves for such positions, only excites unkind feeling towards those who fill them, and whom they regard as more fortunate than themselves. Men who are always seeking responsible positions are generally the least fit to fill them, while men of real worth seldom seek the place, but wait for the place to seek them.

ST. PAUL'S "thorn in the flesh" is conjectured by Dr. John Brown, of Edinburgh, to have been weak eyes, and he advances evidence for it. The first indication is, the utter blindness, caused by lightning, on his way to Damascus, which lasted some days, and was only relieved by the aid of Ananias, "When there fell from his eyes, as it had been scales." The second was the blunder of Paul's not recognizing the high priest, in Acts xxiii., when he says, "I wist not that it was the high priest," though his dress was so distinctive. Third, his letters to the Galatians: "I bear you record that you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them unto me," immediately after the declaration that he had preached the gospel unto them through infirmity of the flesh. Then he stated that he bears in his body the mark of the Lord Jesus, which would suit admirably to the disabling affect of his conversion, when Jesus addressed him a personal remonstrance. Were his eyesight suffering, this would remind him perpetually of the day when he was struck down on his persecuting career by blindness. Lastly he called the Galatian Church to see how large a letter he had written with his own hand; yet the epistle was one of his shortest; and it could only have surprised them by being his own handwriting—not by its size—he being the only Apostle whose impaired vision obliged him to employ an amanuensis.

It is a fine remark of Fenelon, "Bear with yourself in correcting faults as you would with others." We cannot do all at once. But by constant pruning away of little faults, and cultivating humble virtues, we shall grow. This simple rule—not to be discouraged at slow progress, but to persevere, overcoming evil habits one by one, such as sloth, negligence, or bad temper; and adding one excellence after another—to faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity—will conduct the slowest Christian at last to high religious attainments.

## Religion and Daily Life.

Recently the Bishop of Lincoln opened the Mission-chapel of St. Anne's New Somerby, Grantham, and preached from 1 Tim. iv. 8. We often, he said, heard complaints made of the sermons of the clergy, in that being absorbed and engrossed with the importance of eternal and future things, they seemed to ignore and forget the things of this present life. This was an objection often taken against their preaching by those who were commonly called Positivists, and sometimes by Secularists, and sometimes also by others, who called themselves Agnostics. There might be some truth in the statement; but it was quite certain that the Word of God did not ignore the things of this life. Nero and St. Paul ended their mortal life in the suburbs of the same city, and perhaps in the same month. Well, if they took these two lives, what did they see? Nero began his reign under the most favourable circumstances. He was distinguished by the beauty of his person, and by many remarkable intellectual and moral qualities. Intellectually, he was a poet, and might have been a great poet, if his faculty had been exercised aright: and with regard to his moral gifts, he was dutiful to his mother, to begin with. His first military watchword was "*Optima mater*"—the best of mothers; and that was a most remarkable fact. He was also very modest and humble. When the Senate decreed to him honours, his reply was—"Do not give me them now, but give me them when I deserve them." On another occasion he gave evidence of his clemency and humanity. Indeed, Bacon had characterized the beginning of Nero's reign as a specimen of good government; although it was not clear that it quite deserved that eulogy. What was it, then, that led by a gradual decline to the terrible climax of his end? It was secularism—love of this present world, looking to the present world alone. It was love of the world and love of self—it was selfishness, love of popular applause and ambition. This revealed itself in the murder of his wife's brother, who really had the first claim to the throne; than of the wife of Nero himself; and subsequently of his own mother; and led him into the greatest excesses, ending in the firing of his capital—a crime which, to escape the indignation of the populace, he attributed to the Christians, and so brought about the first persecution. There was a feeling of hatred against Christianity in the minds of many people at the present time, and we might be certain that there would be a great anti-Christian outbreak in the last days, before the coming of Christ. The insurrection, which was the result of Nero's wickedness, drove him from power, and ended in his miserable death. This was a terrible tragedy, but surely we ought to think of such things, and not rely upon human intellect, or human codes of morality, or schools of philosophy, or our own resolutions, apart from Divine grace. Turning then to St. Paul, the venerable prelate remarked that there was one particular characteristic in his life which they would perhaps allow him to propound for their consideration; he meant its joyousness—the faculty of being happy in this world, and making other people happy. "The God of Peace fill you with all joy and peace." But how? "In believing." He was a perfect example of the truth of His own words, that "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."