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The Rev. C. E. T. Roberts, Gothic House, St. Ann's Road, N.

The Rev. H. J. Stephens, 4, Castlewood Road, Clapton Common, N.

 SUGGESTED MODES OF EMPLOYMENT.

- 1.—Occasional Parochial Missions.
- 2.—Courses of Special Sermons or Addresses in Churches or Mission Rooms.
- 3.—The Assistance of Clergy in cases of Sickness or other emergency.
- 4.—Addresses to Men, whenever opportunity can be found.
- 5.—Work among those engaged in special employments, such as Policemen, Sailors, Cabmen, Dock-labourers, Costermongers, &c.
- 6.—Very short mid-day Addresses in Factories or Workshops.
- 7.—Open-air Addresses.
- 8.—Assistance in the formation and conduct of Bible-Classes on Sundays or Week-day Evenings.
- 9.—Addresses to Women at Mothers' Meetings, &c.
- 10.—Addresses to Sunday School Gatherings, whether of Teachers or of Senior Scholars.
- 11.—Special Addresses on the subject of Confirmation, or to gatherings of former Confirmation Candidates.
- 12.—Preaching for the East London Church Fund.

The Bishop adds to this, that (as the work in his District requires very special training), Mr. Roberts will take into his house a few young men preparing for Ordination, and desirous of having their first experience of Pastoral Work with titles in East London.

From the Author

*Rights and Duties of Churchmen at
the present time.*

A CHARGE

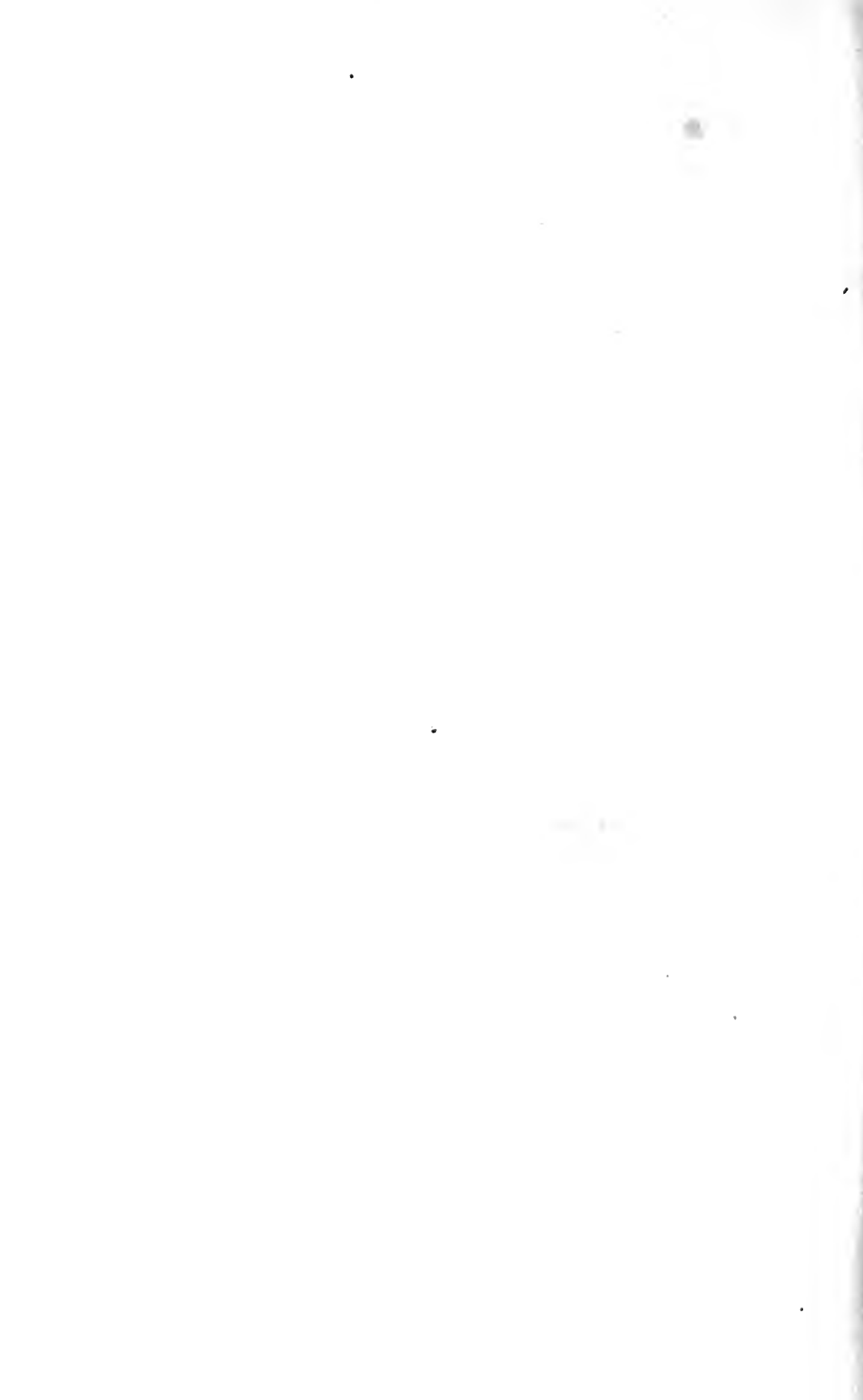
DELIVERED TO THE
CHURCHWARDENS AND SIDESMEN
OF THE
ARCHDEACONRY OF MAIDSTONE,
At the Easter Visitation
IN APRIL, MDCCCLXXX.,

BY
BENJAMIN HARRISON, M.A.,

ARCHDEACON OF MAIDSTONE.

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TO THE
CHURCHWARDENS AND SIDESMEN
OF THE
ARCHDEACONRY OF MAIDSTONE,
WORTHY REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FAITHFUL
LAITY OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND,

THIS
C H A R G E
IS INSCRIBED WITH FEELINGS OF GREAT RESPECT
AND REGARD.

PRECINCTS, CANTERBURY,
May VII., MDCCCLXXX.

PRINTED AT THE
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A CHARGE.

MY BRETHREN OF THE LAITY, CHURCHWARDENS,
AND SIDESMEN.

In conformity with the custom which has been established now in this Diocese for a considerable time, you are cited to attend the usual Visitation held after Easter, although the citation of the clergy is reserved for the Visitation of the Archbishop. By the present arrangement, inconveniences are avoided which arose out of the practice of deferring the presentments of the churchwardens and the admission of their successors till the visitation of the Diocesan in the autumn: the time of service in the office of churchwarden is divided equally; the complete year of office is the period assigned to each; and the new churchwardens, admitted now, are in a condition to act, and to have all things in order when the Archbishop comes.

I am glad to be able to renew the expression of the satisfaction which I felt when I last addressed you thus, four years ago, that so little difficulty had arisen—so much less than might have been looked for—in getting men to serve as churchwardens under the altered circumstances of recent times. Our best thanks are due to those who are willing to undertake the trouble—which, I am afraid, is often very considerable—

in getting in the many small sums which make up the Church rate. The least that parishioners can do, in return for the services thus rendered them by their neighbours, is to give them as little trouble as possible in collecting the rate. It is a wise course that has been followed in the great majority of parishes in adhering to the principle of a rate; in other words, sharing the pecuniary liability according to the proportion of property—the old principle of the Church rate which made the property of the parish responsible for the necessary charges of Divine worship, thus supplying to the poor of our people that which the piety of our forefathers designed for them by means of tithe and Church-rate, the ministration of the ordinances of religion, and the means of grace, to all that would “come unto the waters,” “without money and without price.” And it may be of use, I think if I refer, to the action of an important parish in the archdeaconry, which has just been brought by circumstances particularly under my notice.

“The history of the financial experiment,” as the churchwarden, who reports it, designates it, is this. “After the compulsory church rate was abolished by law, instead of continuing it as a *moral* obligation upon *Churchmen at least*, it was allowed to fall into desuetude. Pew rents in the parish church could not be demanded. Hence nothing remained but to make an annual subscription. This was erroneously called a ‘Voluntary Rate.’ Some contributed largely; some nothing at all. The consequence was, as you may suppose, *unsatisfactory*. Offertories were introduced; but they failed to meet the exigencies of the case. Thus it was felt that some mode must be devised to apportion the burden fairly, and to introduce some *principle of justice* which would act and work satisfactorily. The church council of the parish church met twice, and considered the whole question. Their resolution was to propose a *Church rate on rateable value* to a general meeting of seatholders in the parish

church. A rate of 1s. in the £ was passed to meet the expenses," and it has worked harmoniously.

The point to which, as you will perceive, my brethren, I desire to call special attention, in this case, as worthy of notice and of commendation, is the adoption of *rateable value* as the basis of the voluntary church rate. The meeting held in the case referred to consisted of those who were specially interested, as ordinary attendants, in the service of their parish church; and on whom, in default of compulsory action in regard to the whole body of parishioners, the obligation seemed to lie, to do what the parish was in the eye of the law, bound to do, viz., to repair the parish church, and to provide all things necessary for Divine Service therein. "Pew rents in the Parish Church"—this was the principle on which they started—"could not be demanded." And this principle of the Church and of the law of England, I am afraid, needs to be recalled to mind in the present day. I have reason to think—though the matter has not, as yet, come before me officially, and therefore I give no judgment in regard to any particular case—that in the case of the parish church of a large and important place, at the same time with the completion of a work begun several years ago, viz., the substitution of low, open seats for high pews, there has been a resolution passed to assign pew rents to the seats in the church. Without reference, as I have said, to any particular parish, I am bound, by the duties of my office, to say that any such resolution is contrary to the law, and that the assignment of pew rents in an old parish church is altogether and absolutely illegal.

I must also plainly say that the same character belongs to any voluntary Church rate, so called, which is grounded on the *number of seats* which this or that family requires for its accommodation in the parish church. This, under a thin veil, is, to all intents and purposes, a system of *pew rents*. To levy a Church rate, by common consent of the congregation of a parish

church, on the *rateable value* of property, as has been done in the instance which I spoke of just now, is a thing distinct in *principle* from this; it still remains the duty of the churchwardens to arrange for the seating of the congregation according to the requirements of the several parties. And this leads me to speak of the principles and operations of a society of which we hear a good deal now-a-days, a society entitled "The Free and ~~Unappropriated~~ Church Association;" and I must call the attention of my brethren, the churchwardens, to it, inasmuch as it affects essentially the office, and, as far as the seating of the parishioners is concerned, which has always been considered an important part of the churchwarden's office, would supersede it altogether. If by "free and unappropriated churches" is meant churches in which there are no seats or pews appropriated to certain houses or families in the parish—which, undoubtedly can be so appropriated only by faculty from the Ordinary—and that all the seats in the church are not only free from payment, but also are assigned to the use of individual parishioners, or families, simply by the discretion of the churchwardens from time to time—from Sunday to Sunday, in fact, as far as any right or preference is concerned—there is no objection to the designation "free and unappropriated." The Incorporated Church Building Society was accustomed, in fact, to use the term in the form of stipulation made with churches which the Society helped to build or to enlarge, and embodied in the inscription which it required to be put up in a conspicuous place in each church, specifying the number of seats, so provided by the aid of the Society's grant. But the new Association to which I refer means something very different from this. It goes on the principle which may be expressed in the popular English phrase, "First come, first served." It starts, indeed, with this as its first principle—and a perfectly sound one it is—that the parish church was intended for the use of all the parishioners, and not of a favoured few. But, by its practice, it goes on to deprive the parishioners of their

Open

rights, by throwing the church open, as soon as the doors are open, to every one who likes to seat himself there. In towns, especially, as we know, the distinctions of parishes are oftentimes but feebly marked, or well nigh disregarded; and so where there is a popular preacher, or an attractive musical service, the rights of parishioners, which had been put forth so prominently and conspicuously on the banners of the Association, are altogether sacrificed. I need hardly observe how seriously this affects the aged and infirm—those precisely who need most to be protected and cared for.

But, instead of any further words of my own on this subject, I would recal to remembrance what was said by our late revered Diocesan, Archbishop Longley, some sixteen years ago, in his primary charge. He said, "As a means of facilitating the attendance at public worship on the part of our rapidly increasing population, there has arisen an Institution entitled 'The National Society for Promoting Freedom of Worship in the church.' I have been repeatedly asked, said the Archbishop, to give it my countenance; but I have not, as yet, felt myself at liberty to do so. I fully recognize the importance of having all our churches open to the parishioners without any payment for their seats. Let them enjoy the Ministry of the Word as they do the Ministry of the Sacraments, without money and without price; and if this were all, I should entirely sympathize with the movement. But I believe it transgresses these limits, and supersedes the ancient rule of the church, which assigns to the churchwardens, subject to the control of the Ordinary, the duty of seating each of the parishioners, that is, of assigning to each inhabitant or family certain places in the church to which they may resort for public worship without let or hindrance, unless it shall be found necessary, for special reasons, to make some different arrangements sanctioned by the churchwardens and confirmed by the Ordinary. The privilege thus by law established has in many instances," said the Archbishop, "been grossly abused, and an illegal claim set up for a pro-

perty in those seats, the right of letting or of selling them having been asserted, even though the party should cease to reside in the parish. It is important," he added, "in the interest of the parishioners themselves, that all persons should be disabused of so erroneous an impression. As soon as an individual ceases to reside in a parish, he ceases to be a parishioner, and ceases to have any claim whatever to a seat in the parish church. It then reverts to the churchwardens, who assign it to some other party. All payments, therefore, for the purchase of pews in parish churches, and all rents demanded for the use of pews in the same, are illegal, and cannot be enforced by law. Now this new Society," said the Archbishop, "if I am correctly informed, proposes to deprive the churchwardens of that function of their office which empowers them to seat the parishioners according to the above regulations, and to throw open every sitting in the church to the first comer, whenever the congregation assembles for public worship. This system is unnecessary," his Grace went on to say, "where the church accommodation is adequate to the population, and all can without difficulty be seated; it is highly inconvenient where the number of inhabitants exceeds the capacity of the church to accommodate them, and where confusion is likely to ensue from the competition for places before the service begins. In such a struggling crowd the aged and infirm, who need and value the public ministrations of our Church, at least as much as any others, would find it in vain to persevere, and would thus be entirely debarred from enjoying the benefit of rights which they share in common with others. If the society would confine itself," his Grace proceeded to say, "to efforts for establishing the freedom of public worship by abolishing all payments for seats, at the same time providing adequate stipends for the clergy, without having recourse to such means for their support, it should have have my willing countenance."

The friends of the "Free and Open Church" move-

ment, I regret to be compelled to add, are constantly attacking the Incorporated Church Building Society, in a way calculated to injure its operations and hinder its work, because it does not exert an authority, which it is really powerless to exercise, against those who, in divers cases, have not kept faith with the Society in regard to the amount of free church accommodation which was stipulated for when the Society's grant was made. When the Society has made a grant, it takes care that these stipulations shall be conspicuously exhibited, on tables to be "known and read of all men"; but it cannot take legal proceedings against a parish for the enforcement of the conditions: it must leave the parish, whose interests are concerned, to look after the interests of its own congregations, its own poor, with its appeal, if need be, to the authority of the Ordinary, the Bishop or the Archdeacon. The office of churchwarden is not an abuse to be got rid of, but a provision requisite for good order in the congregation, and decency in Divine worship, "For God is not the author of confusion," saith the Apostle, "but of peace, as in all churches of the saints." And what St. James says on the subject of the Christian assemblies is in truth a plea for the rights of the poor and helpless, such as I am contending for. They were not to be thrust aside while the wealthy were preferred. But the Apostle's language rather implies that there were persons in the congregation whose duty it was to take order for their sitting, and to say to one and another "Sit here," and "Sit there": what St. James rebuked his brethren for was the undue respect they paid to the wealthy and well-dressed. I have thought it right, my brethren, to say thus much; under the conviction that this is one of the cases in which a good and rightful cause, such as that of free accommodation in our churches, for the poor especially, is seriously hindered and thrown back by the system and tactics of a crusade which embodies principles really at variance with each other, and not only affords no security for the rights of parishioners in

their parish church, but even adopts rules and maxims which are fatal to their preservation.

In connection with these matters, as bearing on the duties of Churchwardens, I should wish to recal to memory some works, accomplished in the course of the year which has passed since my last Visitation, the completion or the inauguration of which marked what I may call *red letter days* in the ecclesiastical annals of the Archdeaconry and Diocese ; and which the laity of the church, in full sympathy of the clergy, may regard with special satisfaction and thankfulness on their own part. Last summer saw the re-opening of the old parish church of St. Peter and St. Paul, Tunbridge, after the enlargement and almost re-building of the fabric, at a cost bearing witness to great liberality and active exertion on the part of the patron and other zealous friends, and supplying to a greatly increased number of the parishioners the means of devout attendance at Divine worship. I would mention, in relation to the subject with which I was dealing just now, that, had it not been for very careful consideration and arrangement of the churchwardens, in regard to the parishioners at large, the gathering on the day of re-opening by the Archbishop would have been a scene of hopeless confusion, dissatisfaction, and disorder. The interior of the church having been completely rearranged, and the congregation to be provided for including Tunbridge School, with its large number of boys who, by the Founders' will, attend the parish church,—to say nothing of the crowd of visitors from the neighbourhood who came in to attend the service at the reopening—the result would have been full of discredit and discomfort, if a scheme for the seating of the parishioners had not been prepared by the churchwardens, who, as the officers of the Ordinary, obtained for it official sanction, and secured general satisfaction and harmony.

Shortly before this, the Archbishop had re-consecrated, on another auspicious day, St. Philip's Church, Maidstone, enlarged by the addition of a new chancel, with

tower and spire, to the great improvement of the church, and ornament of the town—a memorial offering of family affection and a token of brotherly love. In the neighbourhood of Maidstone, again, there was witnessed the successful restoration and rearrangement of the old parish church of Leeds, the Archbishop attending at the reopening; an occasion which was not the less one of sacred joy, although it was in some degrees overshadowed by the thought that he* who, as principal landowner, kindly serving also as churchwarden of the parish, had bestowed a large and liberal gift on the work, and had shown tender kindness to those who had ministered there, had been so suddenly called away before the work was accomplished. I must add now the expression of the great satisfaction with which lately this spring, in Easter week, I was kindly invited to take part in the solemn re-dedication, as I may call it, of the sister church of Bromfield, restored in an admirable manner as a memorial—the most appropriate and fitting, assuredly, that could have been designed—to the memory of him who had so often worshipped within its walls, and whose mortal remains were resting in the burial place beneath.

To return to the occurrences of last spring, I must not omit the re-opening of the church of Charing, after extensive repair and restoration as a subject of sincere congratulation to the parish on the cordial feeling, and the abundant evidence of it happily afforded, which seconded so well the zeal and munificence of Bishop Tuffnell, and his family, the Bishop being at that time curate in charge of the parish, and since removed to the important position of Vicar of Croydon, and Rural Dean of that populous parish and district.

I will not detain you with the mention of other works now in hand, such as the restoration of the ancient church of Minster in the Isle of Sheppy; and of Queenborough, a work already set on foot, the better endowment of the hitherto miserable vicarage having been success-

* Philip Wykeham Martin, Esq., M.P., of Leeds Castle.

fully accomplished. But I must mention two occasions on which I have been called to take part in a ceremonial which, in each case, was to be welcomed with thankful satisfaction. I was invited last autumn to be present at the laying of the memorial stone of the new church of Shipbourne, to be re-built at the entire cost of the owner of Fairlawn, in that parish. And only last week I assisted at the laying of the foundation stone of the church of St. Michael and All Angels, Croydon, the permanent fabric, a noble and costly one, which is to take the place of the temporary church which has been the centre of mission work, very successfully carried on for several years in a rapidly growing neighbourhood, already formed into an ecclesiastical district. The consecration of the new church, just built in the parish of Bromley, has been deferred only in consequence of the Archbishop's absence from home, and is to take place next week. A subscription is also in hand for building a permanent church at Four Elms, in the parish of Hever, an outlying hamlet, in which a temporary church was erected, and a mission established where it was greatly needed and had been long desired, with a view to a consolidated district, to be formed out of the outskirts of three parishes, Hever, Brasted, and Chiddingstone. With works such as these which we see in hand, as we pass from deanery to deanery, or from parish to parish, and with the prospects which seem opening before us from day to day, of conservation and improvement combined—and that “by means of the gift” of zeal and charity “bestowed by many persons,” differing widely on other matters, as in the case of some whose good works I have referred to to-day, and specially of those faithful and excellent laymen, gone from us, and from their different spheres of useful service, whose memories I desired to recal in my address to the clergy last year—with thoughts and duties and hopes like these, amidst the difficulties and discouragements which constantly beset our path, it cannot certainly, to thoughtful Churchmen, whether of the laity or of the clergy,

appear otherwise than an anxious crisis at which we seem somewhat suddenly to have arrived. It will not, I am persuaded, appear strange to you, my lay brethren, if in few words, before I conclude I advert to it ; it would rather, I imagine, seem strange to you if I did not. Political questions within the lines of the constitution of our country, such as have successively, under different designations, subdivided Englishmen, in opposing parties, from each other for the last two hundred years, it would be out of place to enter upon within sacred walls, and in what is, in point of order, an ecclesiastical assembly and court. But it is a different matter when that which is concerned is the very birth-right of the people " of England ; if I may use the language of the statesmen who drew up, at the memorable close of the 17th century, the Act of Settlement ; combining as it does within it the national sentiments, the rights and privileges claimed alike by both the hereditary parties which belong to the history of our country. † And our position at the present moment, I think, is one which may well cause us to look out from this happy island home of ours, upon the world on whose peace and welfare England has, under God's providence, amidst past troubles and dangers of Europe, had an auspicious

† " And whereas it is requisite and necessary that some further provision be made for securing our religion, laws, and liberty, from and after the death of his Majesty and the Princess Anne of Denmark It is enacted by the King's most excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords, spiritual and temporal, and Commons, in parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, That whosoever shall hereafter come to the possession of this crown shall join in communion with the Church of England, as by law established And whereas the laws of England are the birthright of the people thereof ; and all the Kings and Queens, who shall ascend the throne of this realm, ought to administer the government of the same according to the said laws, and all their officers and ministers ought to serve them respectively according to the same ; the said Lords spiritual and temporal, and Commons, do therefore further humbly pray, that all the laws and statutes of this realm for securing the established religion, and the rights and liberties of the people thereof, and all other laws and statutes of the same now in force, may be ratified and confirmed, and the same are by his Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords, spiritual and temporal, and Commons, and by the authority of the same, ratified and confirmed accordingly."

Statute 12 & 13 Gulielmi 3, c. 2 (1). A.D. 1700,

influence ; and above all, my brethren, to look up in humble confidence and stedfast hope, notwithstanding all our shortcomings and sins as a nation, to the throne of Him who "sitteth above the waterflood" and "re- maineth a King for ever ;" even He who alone can "give strength unto his people," and "give his people the blessing of peace."*

I may, perhaps, the more freely say a few words on this subject, because, while I write, preparing to meet you in this Visitation, there is absolutely nothing known in regard to political affairs ; save that our Queen, returning only a week ago from a visit to the tomb of a beloved daughter, over whom all England was mourning last year, applied herself without delay to the difficult and important duty which devolves on the Crown, and, following with faithful and careful observance the lines marked out for her by constitutional practice, has taken steps for the forming of a new administration. The circumstances under which the change of ministry has taken place are somewhat peculiar ; and we shall, if I mistake not, the better perform the duties which the position of affairs requires of all good citizens, all dutiful subjects of the Queen, and faithful members of the Church, if we clearly perceive and fully realize the position. A few words will state it. Ordinarily, an adverse vote of the Commons of England, in opposition to some particular measure proposed by the Government, or to its general policy, proves that the Administration has lost the confidence of the House of Commons, and is unable to carry on affairs. A resignation of ministers is the result—other men are called to the helm, representing the adverse opinions. In the present instance, the dissolution of a Parliament which was drawing near to its natural end having been determined on by the Government, on no precise question of policy, and the Ministry having at once resigned, the lines of coming action are entirely undefined and unknown. We know

P.S.

* S. xxix. ii. //

nothing at the present moment, even in regard to the general policy, at home and abroad, to be agreed upon, after mutual conference, by the heads of the party now called to the helm; we know nothing decisively as to the probable composition of the administrative Cabinet; still less, of the deliberate judgment on important questions, after debate, of the new House of Commons, the only representation known to the Constitution, of "the Commons of England." But this we know, that views and opinions of the most diverse and heterogeneous character are gathered in one host; some of them entirely consistent with the maintenance of our Constitution, with the sober sense and rational liberty, while others are of a wild and lawless character, utterly destructive of national order and unity, of the welfare of our country, and the peace of the world; principles in open war, not only with the doctrines of the Church, but with Revealed Religion altogether; with the very being of a God; with the maxims of eternal morality and the sanctities and purities of domestic life. We have seen, in the process of the recent conflict, places of professed religious worship turned into centres of political agitation, and men whose characters stood high among their fellows for religious principle and strict conscience, so hurried away by the political feeling of the moment as to be willing to merge all differences of opinion, and give open support to the candidature of avowed infidelity, and views of morality which had outraged public feeling; canvassing for a seat in a House of legislature which still, happily, opens all its deliberations from day to day with prayer to Almighty God. We shall surely seem to the well-judging and candid to take no exaggerated or unreal view of our position, if we feel that we seem suddenly brought, I will not say to the edge of a precipice, but, I may say, to the terrace, as it were, of some hill, or lofty ridge, like that which overlooks some of our lovely plains and valleys in Kent; and the morning is still dim; and there is a mist resting upon the landscape; and we stand in doubt,

whether, when the clouds remove, we shall look out upon a scene of tranquil abodes, of peaceful and rural toil, gathered round the church towers and spires of our country villages—a scene like that which the prophet of old saw stretched before him, when he stood “on the top of Peor that looketh towards Jeshimon,” with the King of Moab, who had brought him there to curse Israel, “and he saw Israel abiding in their tents, according to their tribes”; “as the valleys” were “they spread forth, as gardens by the river’s side, as the trees of lign aloes which the Lord had planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters”; or whether the scene is to be such, in England, in Europe, and in the world, as in the description which the poet of “Paradise Lost” has put into the mouth of the angel, as that which broke upon the view of the angelic armies, when

“On heavenly ground they stood, and from the shore
They viewed the vast immeasurable abyss,
Outrageous as a sea, dark, wasteful, wild,
Up from the bottom turn’d by furious winds
And surging waves, as mountains to assault
Heaven’s height, and with the centre mix the pole.” †

It is impossible to look out on the continent of Europe and not see what a seething mass there is beneath the surface ready to boil over; how “great matter” is laid up among nations prepared for war, “armed to the teeth,” materials highly inflammable, which “a little fire” might in a moment kindle ‡. If the Administration which now comes into power is able to take more effectual measures for the peace of Europe and of the world than the late Government did, their efforts will be regarded with unfeigned satisfaction by the faithful members of a Church, which has always been distinguished by loyalty to the Crown, and true, unflinching patriotism; and which, in her appointed daily service, offers up each morning and evening the prayer, “Give peace in our time, O Lord,” distrusting for any effectual aid, any succour but that of Him whose “kingdom is everlasting and power in-

† Paradise Lost, Book vii.

‡ S. James, iii., 5.

finite ;” “because there is none other that fighteth for us, but only Thou, O God.”

Or if the prevailing feeling among a large body of our constituencies has been that commerce and agriculture had been alike sadly depressed, that things could not be worse, and possibly in other hands might be better, the clergy, whose sympathies are, to so large an extent, with those among whom their lot is cast—their country neighbours, the gentry, the yeomanry, and the peasantry of the land—will heartily rejoice—and those in like manner who minister to the people in our towns—in more prosperous cultivation of the soil, and continued revival of trade ; but neither they nor their lay brethren will forget “whose gift it is that the rain doth fall, the earth is fruitful, beasts increase, and fishes do multiply ;”† they will not be looking to fallacious hopes of impossible remedies, much less to sacrilegious despoiling of His Church and people, who hath said, “I the Lord love judgment ; I hate robbery for burnt offering.” They will rather say, in the language of earnest pleading and entreaty of the plaintive prophet of old, “We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedness, and the iniquity of our fathers ; for we have sinned against thee. Do not abhor us, for thy name’s sake ; do not disgrace the throne of thy glory ; remember, break not thy covenant with us. Are there any among the vanities of the Gentiles that can cause rain ? or can the heavens give showers ? art not thou he, O Lord our God ? Therefore we will wait upon thee : for thou hast made all these things.”||

Some persons, I know, would urge the clergy to borrow a leaf out of their adversaries’ book, and in their pulpits and their official relations with their people take an active part in politics. I am fully persuaded that the clergy will do nothing of the kind.

† Prayer in the time of Dearth and Famine.

|| Jeremiah xiv., 20-22. Comp. ver. 1 “The word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah concerning the dearth.”

The duty of good citizens and patriots devolves upon them ; and I trust they will ever faithfully discharge it. If indeed that should come upon us, which came on the remnant of Judah, when they were labouring to build up peacefully the walls of their Jerusalem, and Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, with “the Arabians and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites,” “conspired all of them together,” as we read, “to come and fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it ;” “it will be our duty to do as Nehemiah, the pious governor and the faithful of Judah, did, — “We made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them.” * Our earnest desire is to build up, in peace, the spiritual walls of our holy city ; to labour for the “edification,” the building up of our people in their most holy faith ; † and we must look specially to our brethren, the faithful laity to do what Nehemiah looked to his brethren for, when he “set the people after their families with their swords and their spears, their habergeons and their bows ; and I said unto them,” saith he, “Be not afraid of them, but remember the Lord, which is great and terrible ; and fight for your brethren, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your houses.” ‡ If, like those “feeble Jews,” as their adversaries called them, we are even compelled ^{to do} as they were, to hold their weapons in the one hand, while with the other they built up the wall, we shall bear as best we may the grievous hindrance to our work ; § for we shall feel that there are no less sacred interests at stake than those which nerved the hearts, and strengthened the hands of the remnant of the captivity, if we have to contend for the sacredness of God’s house and “God’s acre,” the religious education of our children, the inviolate sanctity of the Church’s laws of marriage, and the peaceful purity of our homes. Amidst whatever changes of sides in the political

* Nehemiah iv., 7-9.

† St. Jude, ver. 20.

‡ Nehemiah iv., 13, 14.

§ Ibid, vv. 17, 18.

world, we shall take for our own guidance those words of St. Peter which formed part of the Epistle for last week: "Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king"; or those other counsels of St. James, which we read in the Epistle for this week, "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." From the conduct of some men it would verily seem as if the outbreak of man's wrath were now supposed to be the best, the chosen and Divinely approved instrument for God's righteousness to work by. But meanwhile His faithful servants will find comfort and support in the Psalmist's assurance, "Surely the *wrath of man* shall praise thee; *the remainder of wrath* shall thou restrain." We shall think it our wisdom, looking back on a time of political conflict, long protracted and of unexampled bitterness, to have very short memories of things which have been said and done in the past, which had better, as far as may be, be forgotten; while, on the other hand, we practise ourselves to take very long and far-sighted views in regard to the future and its issues. We shall offer continually from the depth of our hearts the Church's prayer, "that the course of this world may be so peaceably ordered by" God's supreme and gracious "governance," that His "Church may joyfully serve Him in all godly quietness." And, above all, remembering that there is that which concerns everyone of us yet more deeply than the safety and welfare of God's Church on earth, though Christ, our Lord and Master, hath taught us to make it the foremost subject of our daily prayers; that there is that which comes nearer still to our individual concern—the present peace and eternal salvation of our own souls, in His everlasting kingdom of glory—we shall earnestly put up the petition which the Church has put into our lips in this week's collect, unto Him "who alone can order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men," that He will grant unto His

people to love the things which He commandeth, and desire that which He doth promise, “thatso among he sundry and manifold changes of the world our hearts may surely there be fixed, where true joys are to be found ;” through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all glory and dominion, world without end.





