

# The Vindication of Christianity by the Church. By J. Tolefree Parr.

## Johnny Turner. By W. M. Patterson.

### Spheres of Local Service. By Mr. W. Ernest Clegg.

The

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**The Vindication of Christianity by the Church.**  
**BY J. TOLEFREE PARR.**

One of the problems which demand the serious consideration of Christian men and women at the present moment is, How can Christianity be more effectively vindicated by the Church? Never was the Church more in evidence, in the number of its sanctuaries, the variety of its ministries, and in conferences, congresses, and demonstrations. Yet the vast majority of the population hold severely aloof from its activities. Even the sorrows and anxieties of the war have failed so far to produce any marked change in their attitude. Worship is the soul of religion, and if the British democracy permanently forsakes the sanctuary, it forsakes God, and I-haboo will sooner or later written upon all our greatness as a nation. The reply of Christ to the challenge of John the Baptist throws an illuminating light upon such a problem as this, and suggests the lines of its true solution. "The blind receive their sight, and the dead are raised," and the poor have the gospel preached to them." Our Lord appealed for His vindication to the present, and not to the past. He might have appealed to the past; to His baptism, for instance, with its sign from Heaven, or to John's own testimony, "Behold the Lamb of God." But He said, "Tell John what is happening now." Christianity is vindicated by its past. If we would see its monuments we have only to look around us. All that is best in our civilisation we owe to Christianity. As Emerson says, "The name of Jesus is not so much printed as ploughed into the history of the race." Yet to multitudes of our fellow-countrymen these facts make no appeal. The same is true of Churches. The Anglican Church has a great past. No one can stand within one of its ancient cathedrals with its "Gothic windows richly dignified, casting their dim religious light"; or linger in a village churchyard, "Where each in his quiet sleep for ever laid, the rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep," without feeling the spell and enchantment of the past. Yet the peril which Anglicanism has most to fear is that of being regarded as an antique ecclesiastical institution lifeless and dry by the sweeping currents of modern life. From such a fate the Anglican movement saved it fifty years ago, and its leaders are evidently resolved that no such fate shall overtake it to-day. Independently vindicated itself by defying kingly tyranny, subduing the right of private judgment, securing an open Bible and winning freedom of access to God for the individual soul, without the intervention of priest or primate. The Presbyterians were vindicated by their successful championship of the wrongs of Jesus Christ in His own Church, and the Baptists by their protest "even unto blood" against the unscriptural doctrine of baptismal regeneration. Methodism restored Apostolic Christianity in England, and saved the nation from revolution. The credentials of Primitive Methodism are equally valid. Its early apostles carried the heavenly torch of Wesley's evangel into the dark regions of remote rural England, hurled Satan from his seat, and won evangelistic triumphs "the record of which will be a second book of the Acts of the Apostles." In the course of a century our church has attained the fourth place amongst the great Free Church denominations. But what will all these achievements of the past avail if we now lose our hold upon the

masses of the people and our historic sanctuaries become but the mausoleums of dead traditions.

Our Lord appealed to works, not words. He might have appealed to His Words? "Never man spoke like this man," said His hearers. After the lapse of nineteen centuries, as a spiritual teacher, Jesus is without a peer. Not less of His teaching, than of His character, the prediction of Renan is for ever true: "Oh! Jesus of Nazareth, Thou wilt never be surpassed." In the fourth century the progress of Christianity was endangered by the heresy of Arianism, and to vindicate it the Athanasian Creed was formulated. But its real vindication was the conversion of Augustine. In the eighteenth century Christianity in England seemed to be dying out. "Among cultured people it had ceased to be a subject of serious thought, but was universally treated with ridicule." The King and aristocracy were shamelessly immoral. The masses were steeped in heathenism and vice, and to vindicate Christianity Butler wrote his immortal "Analogy of Religion." But cogent and unanswerable as it was, it failed to stem the tide of immorality and vice, or dispel the darkness of ignorance and infidelity. What did vindicate Christianity and make it once more a regnant influence in national life was the Evangelical Revival, by which multitudes were morally and spiritually transformed. It is suggested by some that Christianity would be vindicated by better preaching; it would be far more effectively vindicated by better living. The most arresting and convincing vindication of Christianity is a white and radiant Christian life shot through with the blood-streak of sacrifice.

It is extremely significant that our Lord also appealed to works of mercy. One of the chief glories of Christianity has ever been its philanthropic sympathy. To certain types of mind this has been its decisive vindication. Many who did not accept Spurgeon's doctrines supported his orphanage. People of all classes, to whom the "blood and fire" ideas of the Salvation Army preachers, readily subscribe to its social work. Said a poor woman to the late Sister Annie, of Surrey Chapel Mission, after she and her three children had been snatched from the jaws of death by the tender ministries of the Sister, "Who sent you, miss?" With a smile the Sister answered, "Oh! I suppose the Lord Jesus sent me." "Well, miss," said the woman, "the next time you see Him, you tell Him from me, He's a real good 'un. He is." Nothing bridges the gulf more effectively between the Church and the poor than works of mercy. No Primitive Methodist church situated in the midst of a poor or industrial population should be without its Sister of the People. "The poor have the gospel preached unto them," said Jesus. What a scathing condemnation of the policy of the Free Churches (our own included) of withdrawing their ministry from the poor of the cities and the ill-paid peasantry of the villages. Primitive Methodism was once the Church of the poor. "Godliness is profitable," and the third general principle of Primitive Methodism is "longer poor; many, indeed, are wealthy. We have wisely adapted our ministry to the social and intellectual advance of our people, and have erected churches and schools as beautiful and well equipped as those of

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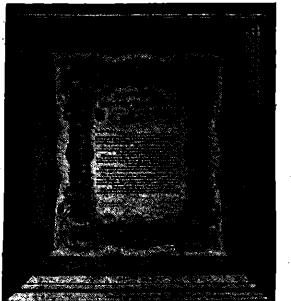




# CHAPEL AID ASSOCIATION.

## Presentation at York.

At the annual meeting of the Chapel Aid Association, held in York on the 10th instant, a very interesting ceremony took place in connection with the semi-annual of the association. John Coward, Esq., J.P., on behalf of the directors, presented an illuminated and framed address to Sir William P. Hartley, chairman of the board of directors. In a felicitous speech Mr. Coward referred to Sir William's invaluable service to our Church in first suggesting such an association, then financing it in its early years, and in discharging his duties as chairman for twenty-five years with great consistency, ability, wise counsel, and unflinching persistency. The speech also reviewed Sir William's practical interest in every department of our Church life and his generous gifts to Constitutional funds of all kinds. In the unmitigated absence



Sir Wm. P. Hartley's Address.

of Sir William, Rev. J. T. Barkby received the address in his name, and in gratefully acknowledging the gift assured the meeting of Sir William's regret at being absent, and of his great and pleasurable interest in the success of the C.A.A. Mr. Barkby then, on behalf of the directors, asked Mr. Coward's acceptance of an address similarly framed, and in doing so made reference to the very valuable work the vice-chairman had done for so many years in connection with the detail work of the association, and of the willingness and carefulness with which he responded always to these calls. Rev. Robert Harrison also spoke in reference to Mr. Coward's pulpit and platform work. In a neat and appropriate speech acknowledging the presentation Mr. Coward gave proof of his unabated interest in the work of the association, and of his devotion to the Church he has so faithfully served from his youth.

The business meeting was also a very pleasant one. The report and balance sheet showed a remarkably successful year, especially in view of the war. The association was found to be in a very healthy and prosperous condition; 2,800 names of depositors are on its books, and loans have been advanced to 1,650 trust estates. The

# SOME PLAIN QUESTIONS.

## The Preacher's Rights.

By "Observer."

Are we quite fair to our preachers? If the readers' response may be summarised beforehand, would not this be the reason? Sometimes we are quite probably generous to our preachers, and sometimes not! In some places a preacher's rights are jealously guarded by devoted laymen, in other forgotten, and here and there the idea of a preacher having rights at all is almost startling. We all know that churches have rights. The steward every Sunday expects the preacher planned, or an accredited substitute. The congregation makes certain demands upon the man in the pulpit—with regard to his demeanour, the quality of his spiritual experience, his education, his character, and his will were further, and suggest that our congregations are even exacting. Those of us who have experience alike of pulp and pulpit are well aware that congregations are both conscious and concerned about things they deem to be due from those who lead their worship. Preachers also have rights—the lay preacher and the minister alike. Preachers—most men—seldom stand on their rights but talk about them. It behoves us the more to take their point of view and ask what may be due from officials and congregations to the men who have heard the inward call to preach. It earns the things of God. If I were writing about ministers in particular, there are two or three of their duties I should be inclined to mention. I should suggest that a minister has a right to a fair margin of leisure. This is needful for personal placidity and spiritual culture. It is also due that he may be a true father at home, spending time with his children, and occasionally with his wife and walk. The overworked minister is almost certain to be a worried man. I asked a new minister the other day if he played golf. He laughed ironically. I do not want to deal with my question, however, from the traveller's preacher's standpoint, but rather from that of any man who takes the pulpit.

Some time ago I heard two local preachers in conversation. On the preceding Sunday both had walked the same road, one half a mile behind the other. Why did not the man behind "catch up" and be with the man together? "Well," said he, "I thought maybe you would be thinking of the sermon and service." Every preacher needs a quiet heart and a mind steeped in devotion just before he stands before a congregation and God. A preacher knows it well enough to feel that the other has a right to his own thoughts when about to take the pulpit. Two will walk together in companionship and silence on the way out and talk very freely on the way back. The question I want to press home is whether stewards and congregations sufficiently recognise and observe this right.

Church officials have duties towards a preacher. Are the proceedings in the vestry before service such as to help the preacher to his work? Are they done along with a shawl of announcements, some of which need explaining and others emphasising; and on the stroke of the hour the minister is left to his own devices with something additional? From what I know of my preaching brethren, I feel sure that, in nearly every case, all this helps him. I have seen a minister, however, in the frame of mind in which the preacher left home and in which he hopes to stand in the pulpit. How much better it is when the steward and two or three leaders meet the preacher in the vestry, and, at a given sign from the steward, one of the number engages in prayer! I have been pleased to learn that this practice is increasing in our Church. A preacher who has stepped from that atmosphere of petition to the pulpit steps wishes he might do so on every appointment. The Christian Endeavourers also have made a thoughtful and a helpful suggestion. A text or note of good wishes, often with a flower, has touched a preacher's heart, and made him conscious of the prayer of the young people behind him.

What may a preacher claim from a congregation in the act of worship or about to begin? It is for the good of the whole if silence is observed as members quietly take their places. In better times, when the conditions seem to allow conversation before service begins, there should be absolute silence when the preacher stands, or, better, from the moment he enters the pulpit. One has observed here and there a tendency to freedom during the collection. A collection is not likely to interest devotional feeling if due silence is observed. I cannot deal now with our forms of worship and their bearing upon a preacher's efficiency. There are, however, forms that greatly tend to reverence, more so than the order that universally obtained until a gen-

eration ago. A preacher owes much to a suitable form of worship, especially one with the prayer in the middle.

There are just a few thoughts on the claims of a preacher on the officials and people. They can do much to help them by a wise consideration of some of these matters. Congregations, no doubt, may claim from a preacher the preparation of a good sermon, and personal efficiency. Mutual thought, especially in some smaller churches, can do much to elevate worship.

## REV. J. B. BUGLASS.

As reported in last week's issue, Rev. J. B. Buglass passed away on February 4th, at the age of seventy years. He had been a member of the Sunday School at an early age attended our Sunday-school at Malpas. He was converted while quite a youth, and quickly gave proof of superior gifts. His way was opened into the work of preaching, followed by a call to the ministry. Like many of his contemporaries, he owed much to the guidance and inspiration of James Macpherson and Thomas Greenfield. He commenced his labours in Douglas, Isle of Man, and for forty-two years exercised a strenuous and profitable ministry, chiefly in Lancashire. He will be remembered as a hard worker, a faithful and efficient preacher, and an earnest student. The propriety of his circuits was ever his chief concern, and he consistently strove with no little success to conserve the cause. Some years ago he settled in the Manchester area, rendering good service at Edgely and Rushmore. Then followed his removal to Ramsey, where he continued to serve his Church. Last autumn he was obliged to come to Malpas to perform an operation. For some time it seemed to have been successful, but it was only momentary. His wife (a daughter of Rev. S. Smith) died whilst he was in hospital. This threw him back. For some months he was lovingly nursed at the home of a son, but the end came with unexpected rapidity. He leaves two sons and two daughters (all Church members) to mourn his loss. On Tuesday, the day of interment, service was held in the Ramsey Church, conducted by Rev. Thos. Dickinson. Assisted by Revs. Wm. Dinning and Rev. J. P. Fairweather. The local Wesleyan ministers were present, as were also representatives of the other denominations. The interment took place at Lasey's Churchyard, the mourners being Mr. Ralph Buglass, Miss Buglass, and Rev. S. Walpole (son-in-law). Many beautiful wreaths were sent, and also many messages of condolence and appreciation.

## An Appreciation by Silas L. George.

In the passing of Rev. J. B. Buglass a strenuous and faithful ministry has closed, and Montgomery's words rise prominently in my thoughts and memory:—

"Servant of God, well done!"

To him every branch of ministerial service was a loved employment, his roots were never planted in the soil of his idealism. He was a fine type of Methodist circuit minister, without ambition for Connexional office, though he had ability for it. He had satisfaction and joy in his circuit work and his books. His heart was in his work, and this enabled him to toil constantly and conscientiously. It was impossible for him to be slumped in details, and he was never the least impatient of them. When he was stationed at Ramsey just over twenty years ago I was at Lasey. Agneash, a little village on the slopes of Snaefell, was close to Lasey, and although his appointments at this village church involved a tramp each way of nine good Maut miles, I never knew him to neglect his simple service. He brought to me a pure delight, into which he put all his spiritual fervor and intellectual strength. He was a most companionable brother, and a warm welcome always awaited him at the Lasey Manse. When he was in the least in need of help, he would come out in the morning and spend the day with us. The very memory of those visits is a joy. How genial and hearty he was, how accessible and kind. He was excellent company in the home, good conversationist who could talk well on any theme, and he always had something worth talking about, for he hated puff and vanity. When he was in the least in need of help, he would come out in the morning and spend the day with us.

He was a keen student and loved his books. In his intellectual make-up, his love of philosophy and his logical precision he used to remind me of John Wrenn, though cast in a sturdier mould, and with a more vigorous thinker, formed his opinions with independence and unenamoured them with contrivance. He could always hold his own in debate, and could state his views with intelligence and force. He was useful. He was a member of the Manchester and Liverpool Districts Ministerial Association, and one of the best papers ever read to it was his paper on "Martinism and the Religion of the Future." His review and critique of that work was a labour of love. He kept well abreast of current religious thought, and was not afraid of "Liberal Theology." He had great faith in humanity and in the power of God. In October last, along with my brother-in-law, Rev. S. R. Woodall, I called to see him in his son's home at Agneash. He was in his usual health, and was a great help. He had been in hospital, which had entailed much acute suffering. During his short stay in hospital his beloved wife had died, and he felt the loss keenly. But he was clear-headed and cheerful, and he was able to do more for the Church he loved. But it was not to be, for he was laid on his back on the 11th of January, and he died on the 17th. He was a man of God, of hope and love which was his theme for nearly half a century.

retiring directors, Mr. Thomas Robinson, J.P., and Rev. Robert Harrison, were re-elected. Rev. T. J. Gladwin was appointed to represent the association at the York and Scarborough District Meeting and Conference. J. Coward, Esq., J.P., and Rev. James Travis were appointed representatives on the General Missionary Committee, and Mr. R. Fletcher, J.P., and the secretary, representatives on the General Chapel Committee. Rev. T. J. Gladwin was unanimously re-elected secretary. A souvenir booklet is being issued showing the origin and growth of the association. The orders for the booklet and the booklet have been executed through our own Book Room.



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**By Henry J. Pickett**

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