

The Church Guardian

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CALENDAR FOR FEBRUARY.

- FEB. 1st—Sexagesima—*Notice of Purification.*
 “ 2nd—The Purification of St. Mary the Virgin.
 “ 8th—Quinquagesima. (*Notice of Ash-Wednesday.*)
 “ 11th—ASH-WEDNESDAY. Pr. Pas. M. 6. 32, 33. E 102, 130, 143. Com. Service.
 [The forty days of Lent are to be observed as Days of Fasting or abstinence. Ash-Wed. Coll. to be used daily].
 “ 15th—1st Sunday in Lent. (*Notice of Ember Days.*) Ember. Collect daily.
 “ 18th—
 “ 20th—
 “ 21st—
 “ 22nd—2nd Sunday in Lent. (*Notice of St. Matthias.*)
 “ 24th—St. Matthias. A. & M. (*Athan. Cr.*)

“THE FAITH WHICH WAS ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED.”

(A Paper published in October Church Review, by Joseph F. Garrison, D. D., Professor of Liturgics and Canon Law in the Philadelphia Divinity School).

[CONTINUED]

There have been since the present awakening of the Christian world to the importance of reunion many plans suggested for bringing about some mode of mutual interchange of ministry without an adoption of the original system of the Church as this is embodied in the papers of the Bishops.

One of the most popular of these is that known in general as ‘A Federation of the Churches.’

As indicated by the term, the leading idea seems to be to establish some sort of an arrangement between such of the Christian denominations as may unite in the agreement by which each of those in the association shall preserve its own ‘corporate’ existence, teach its own special doctrines, have its own Creed,—excepting only in such points as may have been adopted as the conditions of their Federation,—while at the same time the ministry of each shall be allowed free interchange in preaching

and in other offices of the Church, with all the others.

Apart from any principles concerning the nature of the Church, the practical difficulties of any such scheme would be insuperable.

How should the basis of their association be prepared? Should a consultation of certain denominations lay down the conditions and ask the others to adopt them? What reason have we to think that the acts of any such self-constituted body would be accepted by the other parts of Christendom? Can any sane man imagine that a universal conference of the innumerable sects of Protestantism could be had, or, if it should be attempted, that it could possibly agree on any terms which would allow that each should interchange its pulpits and its Sacraments with all the others? And without such universal agreement the divisions of Protestantism, even outside the Church, would be no nearer a unity than they are today.

This brings us to the consideration of the much-vexed question of the refusal of the Church to allow the ministers of other denominations to preach in its pulpits or to take part in its public offices.

This is not, as some seem to think, an exhibition of the insolence of caste on the part of our clergy; still less is it an expression of their sense of individual merit or personal superiority. God forbid that any one belonging to the ministry of the Church of Christ should have these feelings, or feelings in any manner akin to them! This were, indeed, not only un-Christian, but unchurchly and unwarranted upon any ground. There are numbers in the ministry of the Communion of which we speak, at whose feet I have willingly sat as a humble learner in many of the deep truths of theology and the spiritual experiences of the Christian life; the question in no sense concerns the individual members of their ministry, or the personal excellence of the men to whom the work of their ministrations is committed. The Church holds itself to be ‘the witness and keeper’ of the fundamental elements of the Church’s organization and order as well as of the Holy Scriptures and the Faith; and when it declares in the Ordinal that ‘no man shall be suffered to execute any of the functions’ of the ministry ‘in this Church except he have had Episcopal ordination,’ this is simply an application of one of the principles which was *universally accepted* in the Church of the Apostles, and from which no portion of the historic Church has ever departed.

There is also another consideration arising from the relation of the Episcopate to the other elements of the primitive Church that may be noted here. The existence and successions of Bishops do not stand alone in the constitution of the primitive Church, any more than its accepted Creed. No one of its original elements can be discarded from this Church without imminent peril to the preservation of the others.

The Episcopate and the requirement of Episcopal ordination, like the others, are *integral parts of an organic whole*; the same ‘ancient authors,’ in the same argument, often in the same passage or page, in which they refer to the existence and teachings of the Scriptures of the New Testament, will also assert the Apostolic origin and the succession of the Bishops as *facts equally undoubted and universal* in every portion of the Church. If we refuse to accept their testimony, when they witness to facts so patent as the connection of the Bishops with the Church, or to allow full weight to their authority when they assume ‘an unbroken line of the Episcopate’ as a reality which no one would question, can we rely upon them as trustworthy evidence in the far more difficult and subtle discussions on the authorship and divineness of the books of the New Testament? It would prove, sooner or later, a disastrous experiment to disparage their testimony as to the

position and character of the Episcopal Order, and then expect to have them received as chief witnesses in support of the canonicity of Holy Scripture.

‘The Historic Episcopate’ is thus to be accepted, with the other principles of the original form of the Church, as one of the *essential parts* of that Church, and as such it cannot be rejected from any proper basis of reunion.

Whether there shall ever be a reunion of Christendom, or how it can be effected, lies only in the mind of the ‘All-knowing.’

Time, zeal, great labor, and self-sacrifice must all be given, and in abundant measure, before any such result can be attained. But if there ever shall be any reunion of Christendom, it only can be, I believe, upon essentially the principles which have been outlined here.—*Church Review.*

THE BISHOP OF GLOUCESTER AND BRISTOL ON THE LINCOLN JUDGMENT.

The Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, in an address to the Clergy and laity of his diocese, says:—‘The judgment of the Archbishop of the Province in the unhappy case of the Bishop of Lincoln is all that we expected it would be—learned, lucid, vigorous, impartial, and, withal, peace-seeking and tolerant; but it is still no more than the judgment of a Court regarded by many as deficient in due canonical authority, and legally affecting no one save the Suffragan who was brought before it, or such other of the Suffragans of the province as are able conscientiously to accept its authority. Individual priests can only be affected by it through the action of their own Bishop, and his appropriation, so to speak, and formal application of its decisions to any case that might be brought before him. But this is a course which, so far as we can judge at present, does not seem likely to be very generally taken; And we may be thankful that it seems to be so: for of this I am persuaded—that any precipitancy in action would be productive of the gravest mischief to the Church of England, and to that spiritual progress and efficiency of our Church which is now admitted by every fair judging man in this kingdom. My counsel, then, is to make no changes in consequence of this judgment until they are prescribed by legitimate authority. I do not give this counsel with any side glance at the unwelcome fact that this judgment has been appealed against; nor do I care to waste one moment in forming any conjecture of what the issue of the appeal may be. Whether any of the decisions of the judgment be reversed or upheld, the judgment remains and must remain to every true Churchman a *spiritual* utterance of *highest* authority—an utterance that by its wisdom and impartiality has the highest claim on our respectful attention. It is true that it is to some of us the judgment of a Court which we cannot regard, at any rate for the purpose for which it was convened, as of due canonical authority; still it is the voice of the Archbishop of the Province, with Bishops for his assessors. It is a *Spiritual Court in the full sense of the words*, and as such must be to all loyal Churchmen of an authority spiritually higher than that of any lay or mixed Court that might hereafter be called together. I do not, then give my advice with any reserved thought. I give it as being fully and firmly persuaded that this is not the right time to make changes, and that now to make them might not only call out dormant antagonisms, but, in the sequel, bring about difficulties which we cannot now adequately realize. Such advice is obvious enough, and easy to give and to receive. Difficulties greatly increase when we go beyond this particular