

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.

AT the consecration of the new Cathedral at Omaha, an eloquent sermon was preached by Bishop Garret, shewing the great power of the Incarnation over the well-being of man. The subject is so appropriate for Christmas that we hasten to place before our readers some of the valuable words of the Bishop.

THE vices of the world remain unchanged. The advance of our civilization and growth of power among the nations may gild them over and curb their manifestation in some directions, while in others these very agencies aggravate the evil. Never was ingenuity more severely tested in the invention of destructive weapons of war. Dynamite in Russia and elsewhere voices the political discontent of millions. The conflict between labor and capital, which is characteristic of our age, reveals the grasping covetousness of monopolists, the growing thirst for more on the part of all. Statistics of insanity and crime proclaim intemperance as the besetting sin of our generation. Wood and stone may have wanted a little asidols, but gold, silver and self count their worshippers by myriads. Spirituality is ridiculed by the materialism even as the very being of God is questioned or denied by the agnosticism of the day.

THERE is now a remedy for these crying evils. God dwelling in His holy temple, incarnate in Christ, and thus affording knowledge of His glory, is now and ever shall be the only objective source of power for the correction of all wrongs; while faith, accepting and adoring, must ever remain the subjective principle for the personal appropriation of the life-force thus revealed.

THE Incarnation at once reveals the true nature of God and Man. While it must forever remain true that the "heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork," yet it is in the "holy temple" of Christ's humanity that the real "brightness" of that "glory" becomes visible to our eyes. He is no longer viewed, as throned in light, ineffable, which none can look upon and live, calculated only to dazzle and repel purblind creatures such as we, but as a Father who pitieth His children and has infused into their nature the light and power of His love. Nor is He held indifferent to our tears, for Himself "bore our sicknesses and carried our sorrows." If victims of sin, He redeems us from the curse, and restores the harmony between the creature and the Creator.

AT Bethlehem, God becomes manifest in the flesh, and by taking the manhood into God ennobles it. A new principle of life is thus imparted to humanity by which its restoration is effected. Not by the evolution of natural powers is this strong Son of our race produced in the fulness of time, but He is conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary. God's profound interest in man is thus displayed before the eyes of all created intelligences. The holy angels find here the pregnant structure of the Divine Essence unveiled as never before and the fallen acknowledge its power. The *dignity* of man, for

whose recovery the resources of Deity have been laid under such costly tribute, is significantly affirmed, while his *destiny* is revealed in the "life and immortality" which are "brought to light by the Gospel."

THE malignity of sin and consequent degeneracy and death which are the bane of our race find their divine corrective in the permanent union of our nature with the personality of God in Christ. Through that nature as its fitting channel there is communicated to those who share it the regenerative "power of an endless life." Whatever Rationalism might hope for, only to be disappointed, is by this means rendered practically attainable.

THE Church is the divinely appointed instrument to carry out in the world the purpose of the Incarnation. As the Body of Christ dwelt in by the Holy Ghost, it is designed to diffuse among mankind the spiritual forces inherent in the ascended Lord. For this purpose it has been provided with a priesthood ordained of God to offer up spiritual sacrifices and as duly commissioned ambassadors to proclaim terms of reconciliation to the rebellious. They are the living voice to teach the waiting earth the "truth as it is in Jesus," theirs the blessed duty of peace-makers—helping the individual soul to recover its lost harmony and regain its rightful place in the Divine Order.

THE Sacramental system by which regenerating grace is bestowed, and whereby Christ condescends to become our "spiritual food and sustenance," brings us into immediate association with the adoring worship of the unfallen—"with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Thy Glorious Name"—thus assuring us, while yet remaining in the body, that earth has been rebound to heaven. Each generation militant fills out its mission towards the grand design, and then adds its quota to the Church expectant which, in the intermediate state, awaits the "redemption of the body." Hence, "living saints and dead but one communion make." The Holy Eucharist is designed both to symbolize and preserve this fundamental verity; thus tempering the anguish of bereavement, and enabling us to realize the unity of the Church in the communion of saints.

By her sacred seasons, and consecrated temples and holy priesthood, and all the machinery of grace which they are appointed to consume and develop, our Church moulds us into such likeness as she can to the Great Archetype, and fits us with those spiritual faculties and sensibilities required in our eternal state. The Lord in His holy temple revealing His wondrous love, regains his royal seat upon the throne of our affections, and thus the heavenly life begins while we are yet in the body.

Happiness of Christmas.

THE greatest happiness of the Christmas time, to young and old, is making presents. The anticipation of receiving is pleasant, indeed, but not to be compared with the enjoyment of prepara-

tions for giving. Even the little children are full of delight in planning their little surprises for whom they love. This is right, a reflection of the true spirit of the season, which celebrates the unspeakable gift of the Divine Son. We most resemble God in giving. What giving is most like His? Giving to those who need most. The highest joy and blessing of the season can be experienced only by those who give to God's needy children. Our joy in giving is measured by the gratitude that is awakened. To those who have great need our gifts are more blessed than to those who have much. Let us remember the poor.

The Vitality of the Church.

A human association decays, breaks up, vanishes. You have seen nations grow corrupt and perish; schools of philosophy become outworn and effete, but the Church—*never*. Again and again she looks dead; faith and love grow cold, her high places are filled with those who care not for her principles; in the lower walks of life iniquity abounds, and men say—"The Church is very sick, her end is near!" Were the Church human, they would be right; but wait a little! There is a throb at the heart, a movement in the limbs; warmth and health come back, and before men have left off scoffing at our hopes, and saying—"She is dead"—the touch of Christ has come to her as to the daughter of Jairus in the Gospel, and the re-animated Church is up and doing, before the world outside knows that anything has happened. She is witnessing to the truth, she is rebuking an ungodly age, she is winning back the fallen, she is saving the lost, she is sending missionaries to the heathen, she is adding fresh names to the grand roll above of martyrs and confessors; and all this and more, before the careless and noisy world have left off saying that her end had come.

You do not know how it happens; the men who seem to work the change come, you know not whence, you know not how; but they come. You don't know where they get their power; it is not wealth, it is not station, it is not human intellect, it is not even mere force of mind or learning; but the power is there. In quiet hours, in lonely studies, or it may be in the dusty walks of common life, God has found those men, and God has said to them:—"Go, speak in the ears of this degenerate age the works of a spiritual life," and they have done it. Again and again in the Church's history the words of such men have roused a generation and have revived a Church, have quelled and startled an ungodly world. *Their* words did I say? No, not *their* words at all, but the words which God hath given them; words which they themselves would have been powerless to invent or think. Perhaps I am even wrong in saying it was the *words* at all; rather it was *the Word* itself, Christ in them, a force from on high, with which the SPIRIT in all moments of need re-animates the Church. It is this perpetual, ever-repeated, continuous revival, the power of revival within—you know not whence, or how, or why excepting that it comes—it is this revival from within, revival without revolution, which is, as I say, the one standing miracle of the Church's life. Whenever I shall see this fail, then I may begin to think of despairing of God's Church, or of any part of it; but till then, No!