

son. I have been trying to understand God's government of the universe and his relations with men. The subject was too big for me. I could not grasp it and thought that I was an unbeliever. I am sure now that I have never been, in fact, an unbeliever. I have been honestly mistaken as to the province of reason. I would be glad to live long enough to make my friends understand this declaration, but I say plainly that my only desire to live is that I may serve God and extend and help His Church."—*The Church Helper*.

CHURCH UNITY IN SUNDAY-SCHOOL WORK.

At a meeting of the Joint Diocesan Committee in New York city a request was received from the Lutherans for a committee of conference on a system of Sunday-school lessons based on the Ecclesiastical year. In compliance with this request a committee was appointed. Inquiry was suggested by this action into the system of the Reformed Church (German), which has a liturgical worship, with Collect, Epistle, and Gospel for every Sunday in the year. The result of this inquiry shows that recent official action has been taken by the Reformed Church in regard to their own Sunday-schools, which puts them into line with the Lutherans as recognizing the importance of a system of instruction including in it the observance of the Church seasons. No action has been taken in regard to a conference with this body of Christians. There is reason to believe that the Methodists, the Lutherans, and the German Reformed denominations might be induced to accept a system of Bible instruction recognizing the Christian year, if proper conferences were arranged. A step towards unity in this direction would compromise none of the parties, and would bring a large portion of Protestant Christendom in co operation on historic lines. There can be little doubt but that the international system of Bible study has done something to offset the tendencies of Protestantism towards separatism, but the international system while it binds the denominations together in the present, does little or nothing to bridge over the gulf which separates modern from primitive Christianity. Persons may differ as to the steps essential to a complete bridge between present and past Christianity, but there need be no conflict of opinion as to the value of the line of historic continuity which helps the world to see that there has been an unbroken work of the kingdom of God through all the centuries since Christ. No history of Christian thought can do more than establish a harmony in sentiment between the purest minds in the Church of different centuries. To rest the evidence for the truth of Christianity on sentiment and opinions is vague and intangible. If it can be seen that this sentiment has been represented by customs, institutions, and facts, the argument for Christianity becomes invincible. The skeptical attacks of modern critics have endeavored to prove that Christianity has no facts, that it was always a sentimental dream. To refuse this the evidence required is found in the continuous customs and institutions of the Christian Church. And not only for the sake of evidence to the skeptical mind, but for the realization of Christianity by its own converts, they need facts, not only isolated facts, but facts representing the continuous embodiment of the Christian sentiment in successive centuries. The tendency of the Reformation was to revive the sentiment of Christianity without regard to preserving literature, customs and institutions. The degeneration of religion into a vague sentiment is a centrifugal force which constantly tends to disintegration. The proper balance, the centripetal force to counteract the evaporation, of the Reformation into mere opinion and sentiment is an historic sense, a search for continuity of organization and custom. The unbroken line of

festivals in the Church year is a vivid evidence of the power of Christian sentiment in all centuries and all lands. The observance of the Lord's Day, as well as the Easter festival, is part of the evidences of Christianity, and the weekly observance of the Lord's Day gains new lustre from the return of Easter Day.

The Church Year is a path towards consolidation not only in the present but will be the means of uniting the present with the past, so as to form an unbroken line of evidence in behalf of the vitality of Christian belief in all ages.—(From the April number of the American Church S. S. Magazine.)

AT AN ANGLICAN ORDINATION.

In our 'Little Life,' a book lately published by the author of *Recreations of a Country Parson*—who is a celebrated Scotch professor at a Presbyterian university—I find the following testimony to our Church.

Can you find room for it in CHURCH GUARDIAN? If not, please return it to

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Each incumbent of a Scotch parish is ordained in the parish Church, in the sight of the congregation to which he is to minister. And it is with a solemnity which no one can forget that the minister of the Scotch Church receives his commission by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery. One presbyter presides, who bears the name of moderator *primus inter pares* for that day and that duty. Two others already in full orders must take part with him. In Scotland, as elsewhere, the succession is carried on most carefully. The name of succession sounds strange and suspicious in some ears—but it is the plain statement of a plain fact—why do we in Scotland do clerical duty: minister in our Churches and parishes in word and sacrament? Because we were ordained by the ordained men of the preceding generation, and so on, back to the commission given to the Apostles. There never was a day in Scotland when men without credentials met and resolved that they would themselves act as clergymen, and that they would give others authority to do so after them. The succession has never failed in tact though the method of the transmission of authority may, in some remote instances, have been irregular. The writer, never but once beheld an English ordination; it was a most solemn function. Twenty-four young men received ordination in the presence of a very small congregation, and then went forth to minister to Christian people who had not witnessed the ceremony of their setting apart.

In a lowly dwelling in the garden of England, on a certain sunshiny morning in the close of the May of a year a good while since departed, the twenty-four young men and three chaplains assembled, and there abode until the Monday following. All examinations were over; there remained only the last solemn step. The punctuality of all arrangements was as of clockwork; the pretty little chapel was the scene of continual services and addresses at any hour, entering it—you saw devout young forms kneeling in silent prayer.

On Saturday morning there was early Communion. On Sunday morning deacons and priests were ordained in a beautiful little parish Church, near by—Communion being part of the service—and on Monday all separated each to his appointed work.

There was one exceptional arrangement—among the many addresses of counsel which the candidates listened to, an outsider was asked to give one. He was honoured by being so asked. His subject was "The Preachers aim and Temptation." To-morrow, please God, by the solemn laying on of duly commissioned

hands some of you will receive the holy orders, indelible to all men of right feeling, which will number you among the clergy of the greatest national Church in Christendom. You are passing, some of you, from your university career, and from your position as students and laymen to the discharge of a very solemn and weighty share of the work of the Holy ministry; and all of you are now receiving a Commission, which in no unreal or fanciful sense, has come down to you, in long succession, from the first ordained and commissioned, by Christ Himself.

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This morning it is permitted one whose sphere of duty lies far away, in a sacred city whose aspect is in keeping with the solemn associations of its thousand years, the Canterbury of the north, to speak to you humbly and affectionately, as one deeply concerned in your usefulness and happiness; and loving, (not one of you loves her more reverently) your great English Church. You hardly know you brought up on the sunny side of the wall—I mean spiritually and ritually,—with what earnest eyes many who live outside this kingdom of England, and so within the bounds of another national establishment, look to the great Anglican Communion; a worship, which makes the worshipper mainly independent of the idiosyncrasy of the officiating minister, and which, *worthily rendered approaches perfection, as nearly as it is given man to approach it*; a government which delivers the Church from the manifold and grievous evils of demagoguism; which lays responsibility where that heavy sense of responsibility gives as strong assurance as may be that it shall be well borne; an ecclesiastical life joined on, *without a break*, to all that was good and true in the medieval Church; even your lovely houses of prayer, from the grand Cathedral with its sublime roof, and its oaken gloom, and its windows that recall the winter sunset through the vistas of the pinewood to the sweet country Church gray and ivygrown, where the ancient arches have bent over twenty generations and the silvery bells called to prayer in days when the old crusader turned his face towards the Holy land; for such things and more innumerable are you honoured to exercise her priesthood; be proud and thankful for your grand Communion, dear alike to urbane and rustic, to learned and rustic, to rich and poor. I do not speak of the long roll of your worthies, nor of what the Anglican Church has done for sacred learning and light; these things go without saying. But I will testify to the beautiful type of Christian character which is developed continually by these gracious surroundings; the sweetness, the elevation of piety and devotion, the wise and gentle reasonableness, the reverence for holy things and places, the culture and refinement which add a precious something even to the grace of God in Christian men and women. I say, you do not know how great are your privileges, you who live your spiritual life amid these mellow and sunshiny surroundings, far sheltered from the north wind; you cannot make the comparison needful for you know not the things elsewhere by comparison with whose severity your own look so gracious and beautiful. But I tell you, and there can be no harm in telling you, for it is the simple truth, that *not those who have failed elsewhere, but the very foremost of those who have risen to the highest places possible to them* in more than two or three Christian Communion, have said in my hearing that if it were permitted to begin their ecclesiastical life again it would be, as you are beginning yours, in the Church of England, &c., &c.

To any one sending us \$1.70, with the name and address of a NEW subscriber, we will send a copy of Little's "Reason's for being a Churchman," the price of which alone \$1.10.