

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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THE PEW RENTING SYSTEM.

From a telling sermon by the Right Rev. F. D. Huntington, D. D., Bishop of Central New York, the following forcible arguments are given against the pew-renting system:

"One of these evils is that the system virtually cuts off from the sound of the Gospel, and from all the Heavenly helps of the Church, a portion of every population. Whatever the impression may be on the part of those who seldom come into contact with the neglected classes, the further you go into the investigation of the facts as they are, the more you will be convinced that, by this and kindred causes, men who are our brothers, men for whom Christ died, both foreign and native-born, are alienated from the Christian faith, and are lapsing back into a practical Paganism in the very centres of our civilization. Providence has put in the way of some of us the means of gathering many proofs on that precise point, and they are such as to make any Christian heart heavy. Taking city and country together, not more than two-thirds, probably not more than one-half, of the adult people in health, will be found to be attendants on any kind of public worship, or tendering their Maker any thanks for His mercies.

"Why should I point you to any city but your own? You see them yourselves every Sunday, if your eyes are open. You see wanderers on the pavements, with listless faces; strolling, lounging men, unharnessed from their weekly toil, who saunter or doze away the sacred hours, unvisited by any refreshing thoughts of their hard life, or one bright interpretation of it from the Prophet of Nazareth. You see wives and mothers, not unmindful of the deep mystery of life, who yearn for the consolations of God's House, yet have not courage to penetrate the array of unknown forms that flow in and out at the sanctuary door. Think of eleven hundred juvenile offenders arrested for crime in one city in a single year. Read the reports of the chiefs of police, sounding so much like the gloomy bulletins of some desperate disease. Children innumerable are growing up who can repeat neither the Lord's Prayer nor His commandments, who can give no account of the person of Jesus Christ, and have not the faintest sense of their relations to a spiritual world.

"Again, taxed seats alienate the sympathies of undecided minds, and furnish the skeptic with a sneer. I have before me a lucid statement of just this wrong from a citizen of one of our large towns. He says:

"Here are a multitude of young men and young women, in stores and offices, constituting the hope of the country, not able to rent a pew, but able and willing to pay in weekly offerings all the real cost of a single seat; we virtually close our doors against them; we not only deny to them the blessing of consecrating to God a portion of their daily and weekly gains, the very habit of which would alone be sufficient to protect them against the temptations of vice and irreligion, but we compel them to feel that the Church of God has no sympathy for them or with them, and no disinterested, generous, unbought and unselfish concern for their salvation. Here is a father, a member of the vestry, loving the Church, contributing liberally for her support, and providing liberally by the rent of seats for all the members of his household, and so long as he lives and prosperous in worldly business, the family are

kept together in the parish. The moment the father dies the children are lost to the Church, not because they have no attachment to her and no delight in her services, but because in their present altered condition they cannot afford to keep up the rents."

"No 'practical sense' can make this system appear to the world either Christ-like or consistent."

THE WORD OF GOD.

We believe in the Scriptures as the word of God because of their structure and interior harmony. The Bible occupied well on toward two thousand years in the course of its composition; is made up of more than sixty distinct parts, contributed by as many as forty separate authors. These authors were drawn from every social condition,—kings, courtiers, shepherds, fishermen,—and marked by every degree of mental attainment and endowment. Each author develops his own theme, preserves his own idiosyncrasy, occupies his own stand-point, uses his own terms and phrases, employs his own grammatical constructions, enriches his composition with his own distinct graces of style, and stands before us in all his own rich and untrammelled individuality. And yet, writing at such intervals of time as to forbid conspiracy and collusion, the result of their work is not many books, but one book, a book so intensely one as to receive from us the designation, The Book. The Bible is, in all its parts, one in its aims, one in its principles, one in its characterizations of God and man. It writes in history and in prophecy, and yet enunciates the same truths; in prose and in verse, but inculcates the same lessons; is lyric and didactic, but falls into no contradictions. We have only to realize the ease with which men fall into differences of opinion regarding the nearest and most commonplace matters, to appreciate how much is denoted by the harmony of Scripture writers in matter most reticent and profound.

This accord of high idea running through a period of twenty centuries requires something for its explanation. There is nothing like it elsewhere. When an orchestra of forty musicians playing each his own special instrument, rendering each of them notes that are unlike those of any other player, and yet the whole orchestra producing associate effects whose distinction is their harmony and unity, we know that somewhere some one mind has worked governingly upon these forty musicians, that they have severally taken their direction from him, drawn their impulses from him. We cannot think of an harmonious result without thinking of one master-mind as its ground.

When we see forty masons engaged in putting up a building, each covering a small space of wall, and the structure daily growing under their hands into a finer and more meaningful perfection of form and serviceableness, it is an easy inference that some one mind in a comprehensive way covers the entire ground. And still more impressive does the sovereignty of the master-mind over the workman become, when, as in the instance of certain continental cathedrals, the structure has been built slowly up through centuries, and one controlling genius swept the entire interval of five hundred years from foundation to final.

And if the orchestral rendering presupposes behind it one creative mind that wrought the oratorio; and if the Cathedral at Cologne, that oratorio in stone, implies the workings of a single

genius, drawing walls and towers and spires into ripening grace and proportion, along the tired process of the centuries, will not the Holy Word, that finest music of the heart, that sublimest temple of thought, require for its composition the presidency of a single genius, able to impress with his own thought, and inspire with his own mind, every workman that wrought upon it?

MINISTRATION OF WOMEN.

The Bishop of Durham, a little while ago, delivered his primary charge to the clergy of several rural deaneries in the Cathedral of his diocese. An interesting feature consisted of the Bishop's remarks on the subject of the "Ministration of Women," which were as follows:—

"As I read my New Testament, the female diaconate is as definite an institution in the Apostolic Church as the male diaconate. Phebe is as much a deacon as Stephen or Philip is a deacon, and until this female ministry is restored, the Church of England in this diocese will remain one-handed.

"Feeling this strongly, I laid the subject before the meeting of archdeacons and rural deans in September, 1880. The result was the appointment of a committee on 'Woman's Work,' which reported early in the following year. This report recommended the introduction of the office of 'deaconess' in the diocese in accordance with rules approved by the two Archbishops and most of the Bishops some years ago; and it still further expressed the opinion that 'an institution for the training of deaconesses in the diocese of Durham is in every way desirable.'

"Our hands have been so full of late, that the working out of this scheme has been delayed hitherto; but I trust that it will occupy the serious attention of the diocese forthwith, and that at the next visitation satisfactory progress will be reported. In no direction can the resources of the Church be developed with the hope of more immediate and abundant fruit.—We may find some difficulty in defining the precise line where St. Paul's prohibition (1 Cor. xiv. 34), as interpreted in the light of other passages (1 Cor. xi. 5), fixes the limits of the woman's function as a religious teacher; but in the philanthropic and charitable work of the Church, which is her proper sphere, her capabilities are inexhaustive. To utilize this great resource, hitherto undeveloped, to include within the organization and to endow with the blessing of the Church the latent potentialities of self-denying sympathy and love with which woman is so richly endowed—this will be a truly noble aim to set before our eyes. No witness of men will plead so eloquently for Christ as this silence of woman's inobtrusive but boundless charity."

THE Bishop of Central New York, (Dr. Huntington) lately said of the tendencies of the time:

"A Christianity without a Church, a Church without a Creed or gifts of grace, a Creed without ecumenic authority or a divine Incarnation, an Incarnation without a Trinity, a Trinity without persons, a personal God without a revealed religion, then a religion without God, and finally man without a religion—these are the easy steps by which in our time and country men lose the faith." "You can discover," the Bishop adds, "where the nominal Christianity parts with Christ, and deism hands it over to the idolatry of the senses or the brain; the one being at last just as much materialism as the other."