

# 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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## BEGINNING AT JERUSALEM.

Church unity is the dream of the Christian thinkers and workers of to-day. The scattered sects of the Church universal have encamped for three centuries in the hastily constructed booths which were formed at the period of the Reformation. This scattered condition of the Church cannot be the ideal state of Christianity. It cannot be that the Church of the future is to reproduce this lonely experience of the post-reformation epoch.

We have learned a great lesson of self-reliance and of discipline during this long waiting period of three hundred years. Energies have been aroused; methods have been tested; the faith, on its ethical, intellectual, and emotional sides has been tried, and has stood the strain of every conceivable method of development and form of expression. Sects to-day are tired of worn-out issues; a larger spirit of that *Cosmos* "whose service is perfect freedom" is abroad. Teachers cannot repudiate the past; but at the same time they want a larger future. The old measuring lines are breaking down; it is a period of change and transition, a period which most certainly is the prelude to a new era of construction.

Believing in God's hand in the past, holding to the indications of his Providence in the present, what can the men of to-day do for the true catholicity of the future?

Let me point out a few steps in our present pathway toward a practical Church unity, as the condensation of a large subject into a series of definite propositions.

1. Begin with the practical; not with the ideal. Heretofore we have begun with the far-off ideal of Church unity, not with the practical. Our Lord worked his miracle of feeding the multitude with the small material he had on hand. Still it was something to begin with, and when the work began it grew. The apostles began at the practical Jerusalem, not at far off Athens or Rome.

2. Let flaccid forms of unity pass away. For myself, I believe that the "Evangelical Alliance" conception of Christian unity is a thing of the past. The spirit of unity demands a body of unity; a body means ribs and bones, and a structural spinal column. A rope of sand is not a structure. We must begin at that which will lead up to a structure.

3. Begin with the pattern of the Christian year. The cathedrals of Europe are built upon the pattern of the cross. The Church of Christ as a unit must be built upon the life of Christ. Already different religious bodies keep Christmas, and Good Friday, and Easter. Fill out the rest of the Church year. Take in All Saints' day, the memorial day of the dead; take in Advent, Whitsunday, Ascension Day, Trinity Sunday, and let the thought of the pulpit and the teaching of the Sunday school note the season the Church is keeping in memory of her Lord. This will save us from having the doctrine of the resurrection taught by the International Question Papers while the church is keeping in memory the Advent of her Lord.

4. Make the season of Lent the universal season of special religious interest. Change the week of prayer from its weak and unmeaning position at the first of the year—when bills are more plenty than prayers—to that season when the Roman, Greek, Anglican, and Lutheran Churches are hav-

ing special religious services as they are following Christ in his Passion. Surely there is power in sympathy. There is in likeness of service. There is contagion in sympathy; there is power in the thought of fellowship. Surely this is the season for special services of religious interest, when more than two-thirds of those who are named after Christ are in devotion upon their knees.

5. Let steps be taken for an Inter-ecclesiastical Church Congress. This might be held biennially or triennially, and on the same system as the English or American Church Congress system. Let it be held in the spring of the year, and let it take the place of the decaying May anniversaries, which were once such a power but now only a memory.

Let the representatives be clerical and lay deputies; let them come to this central meeting place not to vote, or to preach, or to hold any ecclesiastical functions. Let them come to tell what they have and what they lack.

Already, in the Church of England, and in the Episcopal Church in America, great results in the way of practical unity have been brought to pass by this Church Congress system. There is no short and easy road to unity. It must be brought to pass by the survival of the strongest conviction and the most permanent organization. The first step to be taken is to define our differences. Clearness of thought comes by all our efforts to define, and it may be that a far-off essential unity may after all cover while it crowns our manifold variety of methods.

6. Let there be room in all our plans for the spirit of God to work in. Who can estimate the power of prayer in such a field as this? Who can limit the possibilities of God's spirit when once it works mightily in human hearts and makes men willing in the day of his power? Who can tell what special blessing from the Divine Comforter—who has been promised to us on purpose to lead us into all truth—may be ours when once we begin to take the first right steps? The pathway is blocked with theoretical difficulties; we cannot see our way more than a few steps in advance. But we can never take the later steps until we begin with the first steps; we can never reach the ideal until we honestly begin with the practical.

Such are a few condensed thoughts on the subject of the first steps towards practical Church unity. We must begin with what we have; we must not surrender our past heritage, only we must not insist on lugging all the baggage of our forefathers into the long-expected promised land. Honest effort, prayer, faith, a firm grip upon the essentials, a willingness to be taught, and a large-heartedness, will bring our weary feet at last into "a large room."

There is a reserve of conviction and of motive in this appeal which cannot now be considered. From that Church which is dear to all her children and is historically the mother of us all, this message goes forth to-day.

Is it in vain that a voice says, Cry?  
If not, "Why then did ye despise us, that our advice should not be had in bringing back our king?"—*Rev. W. W. Newton, in Christian Union.*

## EPISCOPACY.

ONE of the ablest of modern defenders of Episcopacy is a German theologian and philosopher, who says that even if history did not show that

from the first the Church was governed by an order of clergy higher than the elders of single congregations, reason would indicate this to the reader of the New Testament. For who would suppose, he asks, that a prudent man, like St. Paul, would so carefully keep in his own hands the great influence and power he exerted during his life time, and then make no provision for its transmission after his death?

But history does confirm this fact. As the preface to the ordination service says, "It is evident unto all men diligently reading Holy Scripture and ancient authors, that from the Apostles' time there have been these Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church—Bishops, Priests and Deacons."

This is very moderate language. It is not only evident, but all Church historians, both those of our own and those of the Presbyterian Church, affirm that the order of diocesan bishops was well established before the death at least of St. John; and that especially, in the very part of the world where he spent his last days, the region of Ephesus. And the believer in Episcopacy safely challenges any one to find the record of a single church, before the Reformation of three hundred years ago, in which Episcopacy was not found and boasted of as the evidence of orthodoxy and descent from the apostles and so from Christ.

A second point to be observed is the very great practical value of the Episcopacy. The skeptical historian, Gibbon, when striving to account for the rapid growth of the Church from the earliest times, names its marvellous organization as one of the chief causes of this growth. The doctrine of the Gospel took firm and unrelenting hold upon the hearts and thoughts of men: but the effect might have been temporary, their efforts might have been dissipated in individual undertakings, had they not been united all in one society, which they regarded as the earthly representation of the kingdom of heaven. They were so united by this same superior order of ministers now called bishops. Each city had its union of congregations under one president clergyman or bishop; and the bishops from time to time met in council to decide what was the faith as taught by the Church and by Christ, in view of new theories and heresies which were constantly arising. This organization by cities or dioceses enabled the Churches to enter upon charitable and missionary labor, to regulate matters of worship by agreeing upon a liturgy.

BISHOP TEMPLE recently inaugurated a series of Christian Evidence lectures at Plymouth. His Lordship remarked that a quarter of a century ago the theory of evolution was received with the greatest hesitation in the highest scientific circles; but the hypothesis had since been examined with the greatest caution, and traced out with wonderful care by one of the most remarkable observers who ever lived. He was himself prepared to accept some of the conclusions of scientists, and contended that they did not conflict with what the Bible told them. He rejected the theory of the descent of man from the ape as hastily arrived at, far from established, as conflicting with the dignity of man, and with the spirit in which humanity was spoken of from one end of the Bible to the other. Very many of the ablest men have felt themselves unable to arrive at any other conclusion than that which Bishop Temple has arrived at as above.