

The Church Guardian,
WEEKLY NEWSPAPER, PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

IT IS NON-PARTIZAN.
IT IS INDEPENDENT.

It will be fearless and outspoken on all subjects, but its effort will always be to speak what it holds to be the truth in love.

Price only \$1.00 per Year.

The Cheapest Church Weekly in America

Address THE CHURCH GUARDIAN,
Lock Drawer 29, Halifax, N.S.

MORE ABOUT ACCESSIONS.

The last Minutes of the Congregational Conference of Connecticut are very interesting. A most noteworthy feature is the relative increase in that State of different religious bodies, for the last twenty years. It is:—Baptist, 13 per cent; Congregationalists, 20 per cent; Methodist, 34 per cent; Protestant Episcopal Church, 69 per cent. That is to say, our Church grew faster in Connecticut than all other bodies combined. This is a significant fact, and shows that the recent accessions we have chronicled were not exceptional. Statistics are also given of the withdrawal from the Connecticut Congregationalists during the same period. Twenty-six of their ministers withdrew, of whom thirteen sought our communion. There is no doubt a great deal of unrest in all bodies of Christians, but at the same time there is a steady stream setting in from all denominations, year by year, towards the Church of England, and her sister, the Protestant Episcopal Church. In spite of the savage attacks made upon her from all sides, the ridicule heaped upon her comprehensive character, she is growing wonderfully, and in part from the accessions of those who come to her for stability and order, and who are tired of negations and sensationalism. It is true that she is so tolerant, that weak and one-sided men sometimes overstep the limits on one side or the other. This will be the case with a body as broad and comprehensive as the Church of God must be. It is difficult to check this, in an age of such activity, morally and intellectually. Sensible men will recognize that where there is vigorous life and burning zeal in a body, extremes are probable. To deal with them requires wisdom and thought.

We wish, however, to point out the fact, that these extremes are exceptional ones. It is true we hear a great deal of them, but it is because the great bulk of our clergy are doing their work quietly and effectively, and making no stir about it. The noise and excitement come from erratic brethren, whose doings and sayings are made the subject of newspaper comment to satisfy the insatiable greed for sensational news which is the curse of the reading public. As a testimony to the effective work of the clergy, we point to the fact that so many ministers in good standing have come to us during the past year. Does not this show that the Church has been presented in a way to arrest the attention of those men? They have not come over for gain. It is not a pleasant thing to make such a change. They have come because they recognize her historical claims, and the practical Christian work she is now doing. They see that all her services point to Christ, they acknowledge her position as Scriptural, and her ministry as Apostolic. As the best proof of their honesty they submit to be ordained by a Bishop. In view of these facts what becomes of the senseless cry of secessions to Rome? Here and there, one

goes, occasionally, but we receive more ministers in one year from various bodies than leave us for Rome in 50 years. We received several Roman priests last year, more than left us for Rome. It is time that people of common sense understood that this cry about Rome is senseless and absurd. The tendency of the Church of Rome is to disintegration. And while we in Canada are not, as a Church, owing to our past history, drawing many ministers from the bodies about us, there is not a live parish in the land where every Confirmation Class does not present the spectacle of some who have sought the Church in their mature years from choice. When we are free from the blighting traditions of our past ecclesiastical history in Canada, we too shall grow like our big sister in the United States.

LENT.

The Church once more calls upon her children to lay aside for a time the engrossing pursuits of the world, and to prepare to engage in the services of Lent. Wednesday next we shall enter upon that Holy Season. Is there not great need for such a time as that of Lent? Do we not require some fixed season—some regular period—when by special prayer, special humiliation, and special self-denials, we may be made able "to crucify the flesh with its sinful lusts and affections," and "to purify ourselves even as God is pure?"

Who does not feel, remembering his past transgressions and his present impurity, that he is weak, and in need of an Almighty Helper to enable him to overcome the evil one, to "fight the good fight of faith, and to lay hold on eternal life?"

Let each baptized member of the Church make it his or her highest aim during the approaching season to advance in spiritual things. Let us not be content with a mere increased attendance on the Services of God's House, or with the giving up of some pleasure to be resumed again after Lent is over; but let us determine, by the help of God, to make a real advance, and to acquire new and permanent spiritual possessions, and to live and walk more near to God.

As individuals, let us ever remember that the true and only test of our spiritual condition in the sight of God, is a fervent love for everything that is His, and that tells of Him—a love for His Word, a love for His Sanctuary, a love for His Sacraments, and a love for all who are called by His Name.

And as a Church, let it always be regarded as the safest test of progress, that more charity prevails amongst the members—more willingness to hear with those who differ from us, more love for those who claim fellowship with us,—and thus, by a deeper and ever-deepening spiritual disposition, showing itself in our lives, shall we best display Christ's religion to the world, and best assure ourselves that we are "growing in grace, and in His knowledge and love."

Oh! in the presence of our All-seeing God, and by the recollections of the past and the solemnity of the future, let us steadfastly purpose to lead new lives, to have a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ, and to be in perfect charity with all men.

ACCESSIONS TO THE CHURCH FROM THE LAITY.

A correspondent of the *Dominion Churchman*, the Rev. John Fletcher, in a letter under the above heading, notices the fact that the accessions to the Church from Rome and Dissent are not confined to the ministry of the various bodies, but that the laity in very large numbers have come and are coming into the Church's Communion. In support of his statements he gives the following references and proofs:

In Mexico the once Romish Cathedral of the City of Mexico and three other Churches, have, by purchase, fallen into our hands, and are regularly filled with congregations of converts, who now rejoice in their new position as members of the "Church of Jesus," in communion with the Church of England.

The statistics of that work show, one Bishop (two others elected but not yet consecrated); about ten clergy, and twenty two candidates for Holy Orders; five or six settled congregations, and a large number of missions; and nearly four thousand lay members. This whole work has been accomplished within a few years, and all are converts from Romanism. In the United States the Church is, according to the admissions of Congregationalists and other Dissenters, increasing with astonishing rapidity. In Connecticut 69 per cent has been the increase of the last twenty years; and throughout the whole country the Church alone is keeping pace with the increase in population—in fact exceeding it considerably; and thousands of Lay Dissenters are yearly joining her communion. In England the large and constant increase in the number of Churches,—new ones going up, old ones enlarged, and buildings of various kinds for Church objects opened—all testify to the growth that is going on. "We can judge further of this increase by the acknowledgment of the decrease of other religious bodies, e. g., the Methodists, who, during last year, appointed a day of humiliation, one of the reasons assigned for keeping it being the decrease of its membership within the year."

In Ireland the Church is spreading with wonderful rapidity. A recent number of the *London Guardian* says:

"The Bishop of Tuam, having completed the tour of his Diocese, has published a narrative of the same, giving the following imposing results. In all, 1,291 persons were confirmed, being 457 belonging to the church, and 847 converts. These converts, added to the numbers originally confirmed upon the two occasions within the last three years, making 2,411 converts confirmed. Three new Churches have been consecrated, and one enlarged. Five new Churches are in process of completion. The first stones were laid of three more, and two more were contracted for, making in all fourteen new Churches, which will afford sittings for 5,210 persons. Six new licensed houses for Divine worship have been provided, accommodating 2,300 worshippers, which, added to the former numbers, will afford accommodation for 7,510 persons. Besides this accommodation, afforded in twenty localities where none existed before, there are five other places in West Galway, not included in the above tour, in each of which there is a school-room where Divine Service is performed on the Lord's day, and in which accommodation is provided for 1,340 worshippers. This number, added to the 7,510 already stated, makes a total of 8,850 sittings now newly provided."

"At a meeting held in London, Dec. 15, in aid of Irish Missions to Roman Catholics, Rev. Mr. Bickersteth made the following statements: "Between thirty and forty thousand people have within these four years abandoned the idolatry of Romanism, and made an open confession of their conversion to the truth of the Gospel, and who are now living to the praise and glory of God. In one district in the West of Ireland alone, in a union where this movement commenced, and where, between four and five years ago, there were not more than five or six hundred converts, there are now between five and six thousand. In the Society's schools there are between five and six thousand children regularly attending and receiving instruction in Protestant truth."

"The spread of Protestantism in the West of Ireland is now confirmed by the Roman Catholics. The *Nation* says that systematic proselytism has had immense success in Connaught and Kerry. The altars of the Catholic Church have been deserted by thousands born and baptized in the ancient faith of Ireland."

In Scotland the Church is also now showing great vitality, not only embracing in her congregations much of the culture and wealth of that country, but also yearly drawing into her fold large numbers who have been trained in other ways. The cathedral recently built and consecrated in Edinburgh, the finest ecclesiastical building erected in Great Britain during the present century, testifies to the activity and liberality of the Church's Lay members in that land.

The fact is, that so little has been said

in the past upon these subjects of accessions, and Church growth and life, and so few Church papers have been circulated among our people, that not much has hitherto been known of the astonishing progress which is characterizing our Church in other places, and, let us hope, which will soon mark a new era in the history of the Church in Canada.

May God prosper yet more and more the work of Bishops and Clergy; and may He so increase the zeal and devotedness of the Laity, that in everything they may advance the cause of Christ, and the salvation of souls.

THE ENGLISH CHURCH.

In order to complete the statistics showing the growth of the Episcopate in the Church of England throughout the world, it becomes necessary to supplement our list of last week, which comprised one hundred and nineteen existing Dioceses in the British Empire, by giving the names and dates of the Dioceses of the neighboring Republic.

It may be safely affirmed that the same care and anxiety which have been exercised in preserving the succession in England, have characterized the action, from time to time, of the Church in the United States:

Connecticut,	1784
Pennsylvania,	1787
New York,	1787
Virginia,	1790
Maryland,	1792
South Carolina,	1795
Massachusetts,	1796
New Jersey,	1815
Illinois,	1819
North Carolina,	1823
Vermont,	1832
Kentucky,	1832
Ohio,	1832
Tennessee,	1834
Wisconsin,	1835
Michigan,	1836
Louisiana,	1838
Western New York,	1839
Georgia,	1841
Delaware,	1841
Rhode Island,	1843
New Hampshire,	1844
Alabama,	1844
Missouri,	1844
China,	1844
Arkansas,	1844
Turkey,	1844
Maine,	1847
Indiana,	1849
Mississippi,	1850
Africa,	1851
Florida,	1851
California,	1853
Oregon,	1854
Iowa,	1854
Minnesota,	1859
Kansas,	1864
Nebraska,	1865
Colorado,	1865
Pittsburg,	1866
Japan,	1866
Montana,	1867
Long Island,	1869
Easton,	1869
Albany,	1869
Central New York,	1869
Nevada,	1869
Central Pennsylvania,	1871
Niagara,	1873
Cape Palmas,	1873
Western Texas,	1874
Northern California,	1874
Northern Texas,	1874
New Mexico,	1875
Western Michigan,	1875
Southern Ohio,	1875
Fond du Lac,	1875
Quincy,	1878
Springfield,	1878

This list embraces fifty-nine Dioceses, making altogether one hundred and seventy-eight Dioceses belonging to the Anglican Communion throughout the world, thirty of which have been formed within the last ten years.

Having given the Dioceses which, as will be seen, occupy almost every portion of the globe, it will be found interesting and valuable to note the number and location of the parochial and missionary clergy of this great branch of the Church of Christ.

Of the clergy there are in round numbers in Great Britain 35,500; United States, 3,500; Canada, including Newfoundland, 1,000; Australia and New Zealand, 1,000; India, etc., 750; Africa, etc., 300; West Indies, 250. Or between thirty-two and thirty-three thousand in all.

We have here a Church with nearly 200 Bishops, over 32,000 other clergy, and probably not less than thirty millions of adherents.

PAROCHIAL PAPERS—VI.

THE CONFIRMATION CLASS.

(Continued.)

The season of Confirmation, if not the most difficult, is certainly the most important and permanent in its effects of any period of the work with souls. This may be our justification if we devote to its consideration another paper. We shall gather a more definite idea of the methods in which the Confirmation class should be conducted, if we first ask what is the object to be attained.

Confirmation is the time for the training of those souls who are already within the covenant, to which they were admitted at Baptism. Obligations of the most solemn kind have been entered into by them, which they cannot evade if they would. They are to be led at a specific time, by a specific act, to recognize and assume those obligations for themselves, of their own free will and accord, and with a full knowledge of the responsibilities and the issues of their decision. At the time of their solemn dedication of themselves to the service of God, they are taught by Scripture, Reason, and the Church, to expect through the human channel, the laying on of the Bishop's hand, the grace of God sealing their act, and bestowing the power to keep and perform their resolutions, in answer to the united prayers of themselves and the congregation. It is evident that this must mark a momentous crisis in the history and experiences of the soul. For such an occasion the preparation should be deliberate, and it should be interesting.

It should be deliberate. The soul, having fallen by actual sin from its Baptismal purity, being out of harmony with the will of God, is in a state of chronic disease. It cannot be cured at high pressure. The power and mercy of God can and will, as in the case of the paralytic in the Gospel, proclaim the sins forgiven. The past may be blotted out, and the soul set free from the dominion of former sin. But the habit remains. And the spiritual training which each soul needs, must be directed not only towards the future conquering of sin, but also towards the rooting out of sinful habit; in short, towards the pursuit of Holiness. It is one of the faults of the age to do things in a hurry. But it is one of the marks of inexperienced impetuosity to attempt to force the soul, either by a "battery of warnings and exhortations," or by a violence of emotion, into a false excitement which may easily deceive itself and cannot be maintained. It is possible to deafen and bewilder, without impressing either mind or heart. By making the Confirmation class a part of the systematic work of the Guild, all undue hurry and consequent imperfection of training is avoided. And it is to be hoped that the time is not far distant, when the Confirmation season will be a settled and regular part of the yearly plan of labour in each parish.

But the class must also be made interesting. Dulness is above all things to be avoided. When the intellect is chiefly addressed, and the heart and feelings are neglected, there will be in the minds of the candidates a sensation of relief that the class is over, which is fatal to any real abiding result. The main object of the instruction is to produce a definite and distinct act of the will. And to do this the happy means must be arrived at, of supplying knowledge in such a way as to interest and develop all the faculties, both of mind and heart. This is not easy, and requires much experience, tact, skill and energy.

In short, the work of the Parish Priest in the Confirmation class is to inculcate personal religion, in the widest sense of the words. There is no existing manual of help which covers the whole ground;