

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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SELF-SACRIFICE.

"Bear ye one another's burdens." What a strange precept for a world like ours! Are not our own burdens enough? Do we not faint and fall under our load, as we toil along the weary way of life? How little is our strength, how hard is our task! We cry out with pain of body, and groan with anguish of spirit, as one after another of our own life-burdens is laid on us. Our strength seems not equal to our day. Yet we are told that we must bear the burdens of others; that we must do and endure, and suffer for them! It is a doctrine that is hard to be received. Human philosophy has not attained to it. Human thought has compassed no such God like principle.

It is true, we find in the records of heroic ages dim foreshadowings of the majestic principle of self-sacrifice. Glimpses there are, in the legendary lore of heathen nations, of the superhuman excellence of great souls suffering for others, bearing their burdens, sharing their sorrows, and redeeming them from the curse. Hercules and Perseus grappled with monsters and destroying dragons, bringing up from despair and death the souls and bodies of men. But these and such as these were counted demi-gods. Not to ordinary mortals were attributed such deeds. Not with ordinary life was associated the transcendent blessing of such heroism. In the common life of the noblest races there was manifested little of this principle. Yet in the human heart has ever been an ineradicable conviction that unselfish devotion to others' good, is the highest and best attribute of souls. To this ideal, however, the common mind of antiquity did not aspire. It was content to imagine the reality as existing among the gods; and if, in the course of a nation's history, this ideal was approached by one of extraordinary magnitude of soul, he became an object of worship to the wondering people, and was assigned a place in their Pantheon.

That which the instinct of humanity has always regarded with utmost reverence, as an attribute of heroes, has been manifested to the world by the God-Man, and established by him as the law of every noble life. It is no sounding rhetoric, but simple truth, to say that heroism is the controlling principle of Christian conduct. It dwells no longer on Olympus, unmindful of the common life of men, the attribute of hero-gods who have wrought exceptional deliverance to families and nations. It makes its home at every fireside, inspires the humble, strengthens the weak, assures the timid, restrains the violence of the strong. By the vicarious suffering of the crucified, was the principle of heroic sacrifice brought from the clouds of a misty mythology, to become a living reality in the common life of men.

While, in the ordinary apprehension of mankind, this grand principle of devotion to the good of others, has been conceived as possible only to the few who were related to the gods, in the categories of Philosophy it has found no place. We need not here traverse the field of speculative thought, extending through the ages. Take but the last phase of Philosophy which challenges our attention in these days. What principle does it present for the explanation of all facts and the guidance of all life? Briefly and fairly stated, it is, "The survival of the fittest." By this law all existing good has

come, and by this law all possible good must continue. Persistence means self-assertion. Perpetuation depends on the ability of the individual or species to maintain itself against other individuals and species, which are engaged in the same struggle of self-preservation. It means every thing for itself and destruction to the weak. It means war, extermination, ruthless disregard of others, as the controlling principle of all life.

It is heathenism of the worst kind, in theory. It is brutality most degraded, in practice. Though men may yield it intellectual assent, they cannot give it the homage of the heart. There is something within that says: "This law of survival is not the soul's law. It may be the law of animal life. It is not the law of the being who is made in the image of God." History, mythology, literature, law, civilization, individual experience, all cry out against it. The rule of the survival of the fittest is only for wild beasts. Man recognizes it, however much his foolish heart has been darkened by vain imaginations.

THE FAITH OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

What is the Faith of the Episcopal Church? She has made the two Creeds essential to her communion. The two are nearly one, and are still further condensed in the Catechism, as belief in God the Father, Who is the Creator; in God the Son, Who is the Redeemer; and in God the Holy Ghost, Who is the Sanctifier of all the people of God. In baptism of infants or adults only one question is asked concerning the inner belief. "Dost thou believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith as contained in the Apostles' Creed? I do. Wilt thou be baptized in this Faith? That is my desire." Sponsors and parents are exhorted to see to it that the child be taught the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and all other things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health." The Creed is pre-eminently this responsible knowledge. In the Eighth Article of Religion we read, "The Nicene Creed and that which is commonly received as the Apostles' Creed, ought thoroughly to be received and believed; for they may be proved by most certain warrant of Holy Scripture." All her children stand together on this plain and certain foundation as on a rock. Whenever two or three of them meet for worship they recite the Creed, as proved by certain warrant of Scripture, and as vital to godliness; saving them, on the one side, from all doubt of the great verities of the Redemption, and freeing them, on the other side, from all the perplexing theories and various systems and devices of men.

The moulding opinions of Episcopalians flow out from the fountain of the Creeds. Whatsoever metaphysics or philosophies may suggest, whatever individual teachers, learned or ignorant, talented or eccentric, may affect, all of us stand together as one body of believers in the early Creeds, as proven by God's Word, and tested by universal experience. The Thirty-Nine Articles take a lower place. Schemes of interpretation of the Prayer-Book, though different and discordant, are subordinate to this paramount authority. Hence we can endure schools of opinion, while all recognize promptly God as Father, Christ as Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit as Sanctifier. The

Water of the River of Life is sometimes discolored by the soil through which it flows—we trust to it to purify and refine at last all currents of opinion in which it is known to mingle. This is made unto us "eternal life, to know God the Father and Jesus Christ Whom He hath sent." Kneeling together before the common altar of the Spiritual Temple, in which Jesus has gone through the veil, that is to say His flesh, we find all assurance of faith that we are being saved by His grace, while we constantly seek to have His Mind and Spirit. However we may appear to others, we are satisfied, as a whole, with this system of faith, as Catholic, uniting us to the good men of all ages and of this age; as protestant against all manner of error, Roman, German, Puritan, or Rationalistic; as conservative, inasmuch as it values and uses the prayers of pious convictions of all the best ages of the past, trying all by the ultimate appeal to the Word of God, and as free, giving us all liberty to welcome the truth, wherever it asserts itself to our hearts and consciences.—*Sunday Magazine.*

REMARKABLE TESTIMONY.

On Sunday, August 5th, the Rev. E. C. Abbott, pastor of the "First Christian Church" in Albany, delivered a sermon from Rom. xii. 5. on "What I admire in the Protestant Episcopal Church." After tracing the history of the Church, and describing its forms and traditions, the preacher said he admired the Protestant Episcopal Church for her Book of Common Prayer, and the dignity and beauty of her public services. There was no liturgy in the English language that would compare with it. In its lessons, gospels, psalms, confessions, collects, it was rich and venerable, and stood next to the Bible itself. In non-Episcopal churches the services were too barren of worship. The people did not join in the reading of the Scriptures nor the offering of prayer. The Scripture reading was often hummed through with. The importance of the sermon was overestimated. The churches of all denominations were realizing this, and were gradually introducing liturgies and forms of worship in which the people could unite with the minister. The multitude were drawn to the Episcopal Church by its litanies and lessons, prayers and praises. There was a charm in using the same petitions that had for centuries expressed the needs of countless numbers who now united in worship in the Church above. The devout Churchman walks through aisles fragrant with holy associations, and unites in a service enriched by the learning, piety, and experience of noble souls for centuries past. He admired the Episcopal Church for her provision for the education of the young. The children of the Church were baptized in infancy, and instructed from year to year, and finally confirmed by the bishop and admitted to the Communion. The Church in her lessons took the congregation through all the Books of the Bible each year, and every faithful Churchman must be well acquainted with the Holy Scriptures. She exalted the value of the sacraments and taught her members to esteem them highly as a means of grace. The result of this excellent teaching was seen in the loyalty of her membership, and their devotion to the Church. He also admired the Church for her breadth of doctrine and her Catholicity of spirit, which he believed to be her great sources of strength.—*Am. paper.*