

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 POSITION OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH.

The *Church Times* replying to a charge made in one of the R. C. papers that there was a "fogginess" about the teaching and opinions of Dr. Pusey, uses this illustration:—

"We need not travel beyond the four seas for evidence that the Pope had no such rights twelve hundred years ago as are now claimed for him. The story of St. Augustine's dispute with the native Bishops of Britain is as well known as St. Gregory's famous string of puns about the English youths in the slave market. Augustine had demanded that the native Bishops should surrender their customs as regarded the tonsure and the date of Easter, and should unite with him in preaching the Gospel to the heathen English; but having taken offence at what they conceived to have been his arrogance, they flatly refused to do so. There can be no doubt about the story which has come down to us on the authority of Bede; and it shows that the notion of an Italian prelate possessing any jurisdiction in Britain had never entered the native mind. Nor is this all. After a few years, the Celtic Christians began to evangelize the English invaders, and it is not sufficiently remembered that they really did the bulk of the work. With the exception of East Anglia, the whole of the island north of the Thames and Severn was Christianized by native teachers. At length the two missions confronted each other at the Abbey of Whithy; and when King Oswy, for a curiously inadequate reason—if, indeed, it was not meant as a kind of joke—decided for St. Wilfrid, the champion of the Celtic Churches, Colman refused to submit, and retired with his followers to Ireland. Thus it turns out, after all, that in rejecting the authority of the See of Rome—or rather the inconsiderable relics of it that had survived the Statutes of Provisors and Premunire—King Henry VIII. simply undid what King Oswy had done.

The only possible way in which we can conceive Anglo-Catholics open to the charge of "fogginess" is in respect of their views on the unity of the Church. It may, perhaps, be asked how they can hold that the Church must be one, and yet that it is made up of a number of separated and even contending "branches." The answer is, that there may be a unity of co-ordination, as well as a unity like that of the English army, where the supreme authority of the Queen descends through a series of subordinated officers to the junior lance-corporal. On the theory that there can be no unity except of the latter sort, the break-up of the Kingdom of David is one of the most astounding facts on record. On the face of it, a more glaring case of schism could not be imagined; and yet God declared that it was from Him! But on a little reflection, the mystery will disappear. The unity of Israel depended not upon the predominance of any one tribe, but upon its common origin, covenant, law and worship, so that there was really no more reason why there should not be two independent Kingdoms than twelve autonomous tribes. The offence of the northern Kingdom was not in asserting its independence, but in setting up a new altar and priesthood. If these things happened as ensamples, and were written for our admonition, the inference is plain that there can be no real schism so long as the right faith is maintained and there are valid sacraments. There is thus no ground for

the *Tablet's* sneer at the *Eirenicon*. The true theory of Christian unity holds out a friendly hand to all alike. Of Rome it requires nothing but that she shall leave off making unwarrantable demands. Of Protestantism it asks no more than abstinence from the assumption of priestly functions to which it can lay no claim. It is generally impossible to heal a long standing breach without great concessions on the one side or the other; but the Anglican *Eirenicon* makes the very smallest demands anybody has ever yet suggested as possible, and no religious theory has been devised more straightforward or more intelligible.

PROFESSOR STOKES ON EVOLUTION.

Those of our readers who have been exercised on the question of Evolution and its relation towards revealed truth, will not be sorry to meet with one of the latest and ripest utterances on this subject. Professor G. G. Stokes, F.R.S., of Cambridge, dealt with the matter in his paper read before the Church Congress last week, and the thoughts of this able scientist and exact thinker are worthy of all consideration. Coming, too, after the dreary confession of Mr. Darwin, they will strengthen Christian men in their confidence and make them more sure of their ground. It will be found that Professor Stokes is no ardent believer in Darwinism; on the contrary, he writes of some of the speculations of that confessedly great naturalist with much suspicion. It is important to see how far Dr. Stokes will go, and where he stops. "There is nothing at all atheistic in the belief that great numbers of species were evolved under the operation of laws known or conceivable from some preceding condition of a similar character; in case" he adds, and this is important, "we should find reasonable scientific evidence in favor of an affirmative answer"; but the entire tenor of the paper goes in the direction that such evidence is not at present forthcoming. After showing from the principles of vision that "useful ends are brought about by means," he goes on to argue—

"We should expect *a priori* that, as the wisdom of the designing mind must be immeasurably above our own, so contrivance should as a rule extend far beyond what we can trace. We should expect, therefore, on purely theistic grounds, that the doctrine of evolution, assumed for trial, would be a useful and ordinarily trustworthy guide in our scientific researches; that it might often enable us to go back one step and explain how such or such a result was brought by natural laws from such or such an anterior condition, and so might lead us to extend our knowledge of the operation of natural causes. But this is a very different thing from assuming it as an axiom, the application of which may be extended step by step indefinitely backwards."

As for Mr. Darwin's theory of "ancestral derivation and survival of the fittest," it is one which "from its nature can hardly, if at all, be made a subject of experimental investigation, or even of observation in the records of the past," and therefore must "rest mainly on the estimate which may be formed of its own probability," "though doubtless," Professor Stokes adds, "an underlying feeling that the phenomenon must in some way be explicable by natural causes has contributed not a little towards its propagation." Still the most the writer has to say on behalf of Darwinism is that it

is "highly ingenious as an hypothesis." "I think," he says, "a large number of scientific men would admit that it is very far indeed from being admissible to the rank of a well established theory," and though "true possibly, as accounting for permanent or sub-permanent differences between allied forms, not conceivably bridging over the great gulph, which separates remote forms of life." But it is, after all, with regard to the creation of man we are most concerned about, the truth or otherwise of these Darwinian speculations, and here Professor Stokes' remarks are worthy of the utmost consideration. We shall give his own words:—

"In the account of the creation it is distinctly stated that man was separately created, 'in the image of God,' whatever that may imply. Nor is this a point in which by a wide license in interpretation we might say the language was merely figurative; that we can afford to understand it so, for that Scripture was not given us to teach us science. Our whole ideas respecting the nature of sin and the character of God are, as it seems to me, profoundly affected according as we take the statement of Scripture straightforwardly, which implies that man was created with special powers and privileges, and in a state of innocence from which he fell, or as we suppose that man came to be what he is by degrees, by a vast number of infinitesimal variations from some lower animal, accompanied by a correspondingly continuous variation in his mental and moral condition. On this latter supposition God is made to be responsible for his present moral condition, which is but the natural outgrowth of the mode of his creation. As regards the lower animals, little change would apparently be made from a theological point of view if we were to interpret as figurative the language which seems to assert a succession of creative acts. But the creation of man and his condition at creation are not confined to the account given in Genesis. They are dwelt on at length, in connection with the scheme of redemption, by St. Paul, and are more briefly referred to by our Lord Himself in connection with the institution of marriage."

As against these statements, "so express, so closely bound up with man's highest aspirations," we have nothing more to adduce on the side of science; says Professor Stokes, "than a hypothesis of continuous transmutation incapable of experimental investigation, and making such demands upon our imagination as to stagger at last the uninitiated."

A modified theory of Darwinism as applied to the creation of man is thus dealt with:—

"Some have endeavoured to combine the statements of Scripture with a modified hypothesis of continuous transmutation, by supposing that a certain epoch in the world's history mental and moral powers were conferred by divine interposition on some animal that had been gradually modified in its bodily structure by natural causes till it took the form of man. As special interposition and special creation are here recognized, I do not see that religion has anything to lose by the adoption of this hypothesis, but neither do I see that science has anything to gain. Once admit special divine interposition and science has come to the end of her tether. Those who find the idea helpful can adopt it; but for my own part this combination of the natural and supernatural seems somewhat grotesque, and I prefer resting in the statement of a special creation, without prying into its method."—*Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette*.