

The Church Guardian

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See page 14.

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4. The courts have decided that refusing to take newspapers or periodicals from the Post office, or removing and leaving them uncalled for, is *prima facie* evidence of intentional fraud.

CALENDAR FOR MARCH.

MARCH 3rd—Quinquagesima. (Notice of Ash Wednesday).

" 6th—ASH-WEDNESDAY; Pr. Pss. M. 6, 32, 38, Communion Service. Evening, Pss. 102, 130, 133.

" 10th—1st Sunday in Lent. (Notice of Ember Days).

" 13th }
" 15th } EMBER DAYS.
" 16th }

" 17th—2nd Sunday in Lent.

" 24th—3rd Sunday in Lent. (Notice of Annunciation.

" 25th—Annunciation of Virgin Mary.

THE CHRISTIAN YEAR AND THE INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

(From the American Church S.S. Magazine for March.)

It is easy to find an undenominational writer, who is enthusiastic for International lessons, but the question rises to him, "What do you know about the Church Year and its Seasons?" It is likewise easy to find a churchman who is well posted about the Church System, but when he testifies the challenge must greet him, "What do you know practically about the International System?"

It is an advantage to have used both systems for several years, and from such comparative experience to be able to say how the two systems differ. The writer of this paper claims to have had the opportunity of testing both systems, not only having used them in large schools but also having written lesson helps under both systems.

The International System necessarily throws open the Bible to study without the balance of a confession of faith and a Church system to counteract individual idiosyncrasies. The devout student in such an unguided condition is like the Ethiopian Eunuch before he came into contact with the ministry of Philip, "Understandest thou what thou readest? How can I except some man should guide me?"

The system is necessarily limited by its undenominational character to a vagueness which not only prevents definite sacramental teaching and careful Church training, but it implies

most distinctly the evil of all definite lines of organization which separate the religious world into denominations. The tendency of the scholar in International schools is to receive such a bias in favor of undenominational religion that absolute distaste for distinct Church lines of action is likely to result unless great care is taken to counteract the influence of the system. All the leaders in denominational work feel this lack of definiteness and try to supplement it as well as they can. We believe that the ultimate result of the International System will be to sweep away denominational organization and precipitate the question of reorganization of modern Christianity. This System may be the broom used to thoroughly purge the floor for Christian unity; but its work can only be negative so far as the proposal of new lines is concerned. Doubtless it is doing a good work in diffusing a spirit of union among the separated religious societies, who use it but they will disintegrate in following it. This is what its upholders must face. It looks as if God's Providence were working out results which will obliterate sectarian lines after having first killed the sectarian spirit.

But when the existing lines of church organizations are broken down where will the unsettled scholar drift? The attachment to a particular denomination is an anchorage to many unstable souls, and while the definite training may narrow, it is a question whether human nature is strong enough to dispense with the anchorage in the mid-stream of modern unbelief. The disintegration of the weaker sects will enlarge the stronger sects but individualism will carry away many before they form a new attachment. The denomination which survives the longest will be the largest gainer, and may cheer on the disintegration, waiting on its own rock of conservatism to reach down a hand to those who are swept by in the great flood of disorganization.

Undoubtedly the more sure the historic base of an organization, the more likely it will be to gain the final hold. It is quite certain that the International System will destroy denominationalism, and in doing this its work will play a worthy part in history.

The Churches which possess historic continuity will longest survive this disintegration, and if any Church, having the bed-rock of historic fact, can also offer the historic faith in its simplicity that Church will be used in God's providence as a rallying point for the Church of the future. If any Church can stand the prevalence of the International cultus and its evolution into undenominationalism, surely the Protestant Episcopal has good reason to hope and wait on the survival of the fittest.

But let us ask how far can the International System meet the wants of scholars in our own Church? It must be plain to every one that the pupils in a school looking forward to worship in which a prayer-book is used, have a need of preparation to use liturgical forms. This need does not exist in a denomination without a prayer-book. The extempore worship in denominations without a ritual creates no demand for the study of devotional forms. In our Church a special want is created in the future of the scholars as worshippers with a form. Every form tends to deadness by familiar repetition. The only method to prevent this and to preserve the form from becoming empty is to enrich it by Scriptural study. The pages of the Prayer-book need to be read with the lamp of God's Word burning brightly above them. The Church System provides for this by teaching Scripture lessons that illuminate the ritual. Familiarity with the Prayer Book is the want of all who worship in our Church, a familiarity with its foundations in the Bible. Bible study in connection with the Prayer Book is the only way to meet the wants of our scholars.

There is a course of Bible reading in our lectionary. The Scriptures are read five times

in the average morning service. These Scriptures are arranged to illustrate the Christian Year and by the study of the Church System of lessons the pupils go into Church to listen for echoes of the Sunday-School lesson in the Service. The new Five Year's Course will largely help to draw the children to intelligent participation in every Sunday's Service.

It is not only Christmas day or Easter day that is brightened by the Church System of lessons but every Sunday there are links between the study in the school and the worship in the Church. It cannot but create a smile to hear it said that the recognition of Christmas and Easter in the International System would fit it to supplant the Church System. Look at Easter for instance. For six Sundays in Lent we are being led through stages of thought that prepare us for the Easter joy. The rationale of the Christian Year approaches no festal day without a penitential prelude for weeks previous. The Scriptures studied in the school and read in the Church are a spiritual preparation. The seasons of the Church Year represent successive stages of Christian feeling which gradually ripen the character and as the natural ear moves to the harvest by gradual transitions of sunlight, so the seasons of the Church Year move to their harvest through the light of Christ who stands as the central sun above all our observances.

Much is said about the talent accessible to students of the International System. Let us reply first that the intellectual element in teaching is not recognized in the New Testament as a means of salvation and the claim of supremacy of intellect is a dangerous plaything, a mere toy weapon in a fight where all depends on the Sword of the Spirit. Yet if any man boast, the Church System can point to a vast literature of devotion out of which the Prayer Book was drawn, of a System of Bible reading dating back to St. Jerome in the Epistles and Gospels and to a classic theological literature that exists ready made, incomparatively richer and nobler than any publications of the present day. The English Church which gave the Bible to the English people, gave them a Church System of reading it which secures her congregations more Scriptural portions at each service than are read all day in the combined services of any other organization. It is incredible to us that any one can really know the Church System of Bible Reading and not feel that those who are growing up into the use of our Prayer Book need to be trained in Sunday-school to appreciate their own future treasures. Had our own clergy done their utmost to know and teach their own system, the Sunday-schools would long ago have clamoured for a Church System of Bible Lessons.

CHURCH PAPERS AND PARISH WORK.

BY THE REV. BEVERLEY E. WARNER.

There is one use of printer's ink which I do not think the clergy generally put their trust in to the extent they might, with benefit to their parishes and to themselves. It is that form of ink application which takes the shape of a Church press.

In many parishes are parish papers, which are a valuable aid to the rector and people. But in few parishes comparatively have our general Church papers the circulation they should have.

The local parish paper can perform well only one small part of the mission of Church journalism. It can explain, illustrate, and push local work. It may prevent the chancel from being used as a bulletin board; it may record from month to month the progress of *res dom-*