

# THE CHURCH GUARDIAN.

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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 JANUARY.

- Jan'y. 1st—The Circumcision of Our Lord.  
" 3rd—2nd Sunday after Christmas.—Notice of Epiphany.  
" 6th—The Epiphany of Our Lord.—Athan. Creed  
" 10th—1st Sunday after Epiphany.  
" 17th—2nd do do do  
" 24th—3rd do do do Notice of the Conversion of St. Paul.  
" 25th—Conversion of St. Paul.  
" 31st—4th Sunday after the Epiphany.—Notice of the Purification.

## BIBLICAL CRITICISM.

Biblical criticism is now better equipped in its apparatus, more precise in its methods and less embarrassed by popular superstition and prejudice than hitherto. It has shared in the rapid progress of all other arts and sciences in this nineteenth century. But it is no new knowledge, nor are its latest prophets a new race of beings, neither angels nor devils, but simply fallible men. The time-honored principles of Biblical criticism remain unchanged, and the enunciation of new postulates has repeatedly been met with rebuttal on the threshold, or has been received on probation, only to be tested and discarded. Germany has been most prolific of theories of inspiration and interpretation, because neither German Romanism nor German Protestantism was ever tinged with the Calvinistic conceit of an infallible book; a contradiction in terms; for infallibility is an attribute of persons, and a book is a thing, even though it be a holy book and a holy thing. For this reason German scholarship has had little or no restraint from public opinion. Neither the Roman nor the Lutheran communion is committed to

any theory of inspiration, nor, for that matter, is the Anglican. But the influence of Calvinism in Great Britain has been strong and persistent, and its theory of inspiration has had a firm hold on the masses of all English-speaking peoples; a hold which the marvelous fidelity and matchless eloquence of the King James version has done much to perpetuate.

Yet, even in Germany, school after school of Biblical critics has arisen, flourished and passed away, within the memory of living men, and nothing has been more effective, in exploding such froth-bubbles, than the pin-thrust of a reverent English scholarship, with its gaze fixed upon the Word in the Scriptures, and its free acknowledgement of the imperfect vehicle in which that Word was manifested and transmitted. Not all German criticism of Holy Scripture is hostile or infidel; although much of the best of it has been destructive of old fallacies, rather than constructive of new lines of study and inquiry. Much of the "higher Biblical criticism," which is now distressing the average English-bred believer is already "ancient history" in Germany and to English scholars; and it is no more to be dreaded than the usual category of children's diseases. It is an experience which seems inevitable in the infancy of any re-examination of the grounds of faith, and it may prove fatal in individual cases, and overthrow the faith of some. But it is a comfortable thought that one attack of it is usually prophylactic against a recurrence of the malady. The increase of critical apparatus is multiplying and strengthening the true Catholic faith in Holy Scripture, at least as rapidly as it is undermining old strongholds of popular refuge, with eager searchers exploring every nook and corner of Bible lands, and ransacking every ancient monastery and repository of old writings, and with acute scholars eager to decipher every hieroglyphic. The chances are even, from a scientific point of view, that the present disturbances shall fall out rather to the greater confirmation of the faith; and from the Christian outlook the conviction of such triumph is a certitude.

If our readers will only consider that all the Biblical learning of all the schools, is only a painful effort to hark back to the scenes and circumstances of the first writing of any book of Holy Scripture, and to breathe the atmosphere and think the thoughts of the human prophet and his immediate hearers, it will be seen that the most advanced scholar might be glad to sit at the feet of the most unlearned and ignorant fugitive of the Exodus, or captive in Babylon, or fisherman on Gennesaret, that listened to Moses, or Jeremiah, or the Christ. All modern Biblical scholarship falls far short of the commonest intelligence of them to whom the Word first came and whose familiar habitude of mind, and every day knowledge of facts, it first addressed. To realize this truth is to remain unterrified by the vagaries of scholars who may be only wise in their own conceits and liable to contradiction by their own next discoveries, while the fact that a revelation of God has overleaped so many centuries of confusion and changes in human life to come to us quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword to pierce the conscience of the latest generation, as if the first, is a supreme witness to the fact that it is indeed the Word of God, which shall never pass away.—*Churchman.*

## THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

### Some Lessons Drawn From it By a Congregational Divine.

Rev. W. H. G. Temple, pastor of the Philips Congregational church, South Boston, began lately a series of fortnightly sermons on the leading evangelical denominations. There was an unusually large congregation present.

His special theme was "The Episcopal Church," and his text was from Philippians i., 1, 2, "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons. Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ."

Instead of the usual long prayer Mr. Temple read from the service of the Episcopal prayer-book. In opening his sermon, which was delivered without notes, he said: Whether or not this passage refers to a church equipped with the three Orders of the ministry is a disputed point; but that is the substance of the salutation I bring to-day to the Episcopal church, whose record challenges the admiration of Christendom, and upon which the blessing of God has abundantly rested. I have only pleasant things to say about it and the other denominations I shall treat in this series. They are all parts of the one Catholic and Apostolic church. My object is to learn lessons for ourselves from these denominations.

The Episcopal Church is of most ancient origin. While I find nothing in the New Testament to indicate its polity as of divine authorship, I find this form of Church organization in immediate post-apostolic times. I claim as stoutly as any Anglican *that the British Church existed previous to the advent of St. Augustine, in 597, and was entirely independent of Rome.*

The history of the English church has been the history of the English nation. Her vigorous child, the Protestant Episcopal Church in this country has become a large factor in the moulding of the religious faith of the United States. What lessons can we learn from the historic church? First, the prominence of the Church idea; second, the beauties of worship; and third, the liberality of the Episcopal Church toward the three schools of thought within it.

If three entirely different schools of thought can exist in outward harmony in one Church, cannot we, who are bound by no organic union, at least be charitable to those who differ from us? Thus shall we be prepared to pronounce the apostolic benediction upon the Church universal.—*St. John's Echo, Worcester, Mass.*

## THE EMBER DAYS.

To what extent are Churchmen in general responsible for the presence of unworthy and unqualified men in the ranks of the ministry? To such extent, at least, as they have neglected the duties and prayers of these ember seasons. How many always remember the special prayers? How many keep these "days of fasting" as the Church enjoins? Why pray that "laborers may be sent forth into the harvest," and fail to add, in proper time, that those through whom they are sent "may lay hands suddenly on no