

# 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.

VOL. V.]  
No. 8.]

HALIFAX. WEDNESDAY, JUNE 20, 1883. WINNIPEG.

[\$1.50  
PER YEAR.]

## THE TRUE ORIGIN OF PRESBYTERIAN FORMS OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

Of late several efforts have been made to trace back the system of Presbyterianism to the first ages of the Christian religion. Various theories have been started, but with a uniform want of success. Probably those who originated Presbyterian communities in the sixteenth century knew all about it. They uniformly represent that they did not desire to overthrow Episcopacy, but that they were forced into action by the overweening and tyrannical pretensions of Rome. It is to the evil action therefore of the Papacy that Christendom owes together with the hundred other distractions of Christendom, the institution of a Presbyterian Church polity. We give some quotations from Presbyterian authorities:—

"If they would give us such an hierarchy," says Calvin, "in which the Bishops did not rise above others as that they would not refuse to be subject to Christ, and to depend on Him as their only head—then, indeed, I should confess that there is no anathema of which those persons are not worthy, if any should there be, who could not reverence such an hierarchy and submit to it with the utmost obedience."

"If there be any," says Beza, "which you can hardly make me believe, who reject the whole Order of Bishops, God forbid that any man of a sound mind should assent to the madness of such persons." And speaking of the government of the Church of England by Bishops he said: "Let her enjoy that singular blessing of God, which I wish may ever be continued to her."

Luther declares that, "if the Popish Bishops would cease to persecute the Gospel, he would acknowledge them as fathers and willingly obey their authority," which, says he, "we find supported by the Word of God."

Melancthon lays the blame on "the cruelty of the Popish Bishops" that the Episcopal polity was destroyed, which, says he, "we so earnestly desire to preserve," and in writing to Cardinal DuBellay Bishop of Paris, he expresses his wish that "the power of Bishops should be preserved."

The articles of Smalcald, drawn up by Luther, declare that "the Church can never be better governed and preserved then when we all live under one Head, Jesus Christ, and all Bishops equal in office, though unequal in gifts," etc. The Apostles were equal, and afterwards the Bishops, in all Christendom, until the Pope raised his head above all.

The learned Blondel concludes his "Apology for the opinions of Jerome," with the following language: "By all that we have said to assert the rights of the Presbytery we do not intend to invalidate the ancient and Apostolical Constitution of Episcopal pre-eminence. But we believe that wheresoever it is established conformably to the ancient canons it must be carefully preserved; and wheresoever, by some heat of contention or otherwise, it has been put down and violated, it ought to be reverently restored."

The celebrated Le Clerc, a divine of the Presbyterian establishment in Holland, expresses himself as follows: "I have always professed to believe that Episcopacy is of Apostolic institution—that man had no right to change it in any place, unless it was impossible otherwise to reform the abuses that had crept into Christianity; that it was

justly preserved in England, where the Reformation was practicable, without altering it; and that therefore, the Protestants in England and other places where there are Bishops would do very ill to separate from that discipline."

The learned Bogerman, President of the Synod of Dort, is known to have expressed himself to the same effect when addressing the English Bishops who attended the meeting of that Assembly. Alluding to the happiness of the Church of England in retaining a Primitive Episcopacy, "Nobis non licit esse tam beatiss!" was his emphatic declaration.

Probably nowhere was the oppression of the Papacy more keenly felt than in Scotland, among a liberty-loving and high-spirited people, possessed of peculiarly bright intellectual endowments, and here, accordingly, Presbyterianism struck deep root. Irish Presbyterianism is not of native growth but is an importation from Scotland.—*Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette.*

## SPECULATIVE PROPHECY.

THOUGH the late Dr. Arnold anticipated that great results would follow the discovery (half-a-century ago) of the key to decipher the Egyptian monuments, he had probably no idea of the extent of these discoveries in confirmation of the story of the Exodus as recorded by Moses, as well as other portions of Scripture prophecy relating to Egypt. It is a remarkable fact that no secular historian has ever mentioned the conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, which was prophetically declared by Ezekiel in chapter xxx. of his prophecies. And it is only recently that the learned have become aware of the existence of documentary and contemporary evidence, both cuneiform and hieroglyphic, showing that the conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar, in the thirty-seventh year of his reign, had really taken place. So infatuated were the sceptical school on this point that before the discovery of this evidence Dr. Wiedemann, in his *Geschichte Aegyptens* declared that Ezekiel's prophetic statement was untrue, and that "even on the theological side men had ceased to defend it."

But however satisfactory it is to see science confirming the truth of Scripture in relation to "Fulfilled Prophecy," it is no less deplorable to see the injury which many well meaning Christians are doing at the present day in regard to what must be termed "Speculative Prophecy." This is very evident in a twofold manner: First, in the unlawful speculations which they are every now and then putting forth respecting what is popularly called "the end of the world." Second, in the extraordinary interpretations of certain prophetic parts of Scripture relative to Egypt. As regards the first of these speculations, the earliest writer on the subject is a Papist of the fourteenth century, one Leonardo Aretino, secretary to the reigning Pope, who published a work entitled *The World's Destruction*, in which he predicted that it would occur in the last fortnight of November, 1881. Next we have an old Yorkshire witch called "Mother Shipton," of the sixteenth century, who is said to have predicted the same year—

"The world to an end will come  
In eighteen hundred and eighty-one."

But these doggerel lines proved to be a hoax, invented by a Mr. Hindley, of Brighton, as may be seen fully set forth in *Notes and Queries*. Third,

Mr. Bird, of Clifton, editor of the *Banner of Israel*, has written very extensively on this subject, and though he appears to have varied his speculations as regards the date, he seems to have persuaded himself that he could name the true time of the end of this age. In one place he says, "The point for Christians to ponder is whether 1881 may not be the year in which will take place the public manifestation of the sons of God." In a paper dated March, 1879, he writes: "The length of the grand gallery in the great pyramid symbolizes the duration of the Christian dispensation, as destined to occur about July or August, 1882. The impending south wall shows the suddenness of the Lord's coming. Other calculations point also to A. D. 1881-2 as the beginning of the millennial reign of our Lord upon earth. Let me ask you to dwell on the marvellous favor shown to us British, being Israel, in that we are thus enabled to calculate the date of the Lord's return." But this writer seems to hesitate whether the return is to take place in May or August; as in one place he writes, "The dispensation of grace will come to a sudden close in May, 1882," while in another he names "August 6, 1882, for the terrible events we anticipate." As both these dates have passed without our Lord having returned according to Holy Writ, I understand that now Mr. Bird consoles himself in some mysterious manner with the belief that "the new dispensation began in May last." Fourth, the editor of the *Christian Herald* is quite opposed to the above speculation, and, as the organ of the *Futurist* school of prophetic interpreters, he assures his readers that "the second advent of Christ will not take place until 1890, because "3,500 years of 70 jubilees, commencing with the epoch of the Exodus B. C. 1610, will terminate A. D., 1890."

It is melancholy to reflect how completely all these writers ignore our Lord's solemn words, "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the Angels of Heaven, but my Father only.—*Bouchier Wrey Saville, Rector of Shillingford, in London Record.*

## "THE DECAY OF PREACHING."

It has been asserted very confidently that the influence of the pulpit is declining. I am not going to discuss this question, though I think a very good case might be made to show that it is not. I would merely say, that it seems to me that there is no reason why it should suffer any real decline, unless it can be proved that the power of the Holy Ghost is less than it was, or that the preacher of to-day has less ground to expect that it will be put forth through him, than that on which the preacher of a past generation was warranted in relying. It is, I think, quite true that the influence of the pulpit is less exclusive than it used to be, because its functions are now largely shared in by the press, and the Holy Spirit can and does use that instrumentality as well as this, for the propagation of truth and the salvation of men's souls. But, while the living voice continues to be the great means of communication between man and man, the preaching of the Gospel will remain one of the chief means of reaching human hearts with the Divine message, and its influence will be greater or smaller according as the Holy Spirit is present in greater or lesser power.—*Canon Peacocke.*