

# THE CHURCH GUARDIAN,

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## DECISIONS REGARDING NEWSPAPERS.

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## CALENDAR FOR FEBRUARY.

- Feb'y. 7th.—5th Sunday after the Epiphany.  
" 14th.—Septuagesima.  
" 21st.—Sexagesima—Notice of St. Matthias.  
" 24th.—St. Matthias, Ap. and Mar. Athan.  
" 28th.—Quinquagesima. Notice of Ash Wednesday.

## "AS THIS CHURCH HATH RECEIVED THE SAME."

By BISHOP STARKEY, OF NEWARK, N. J.

The obligations and responsibility of the ministry cover, in the language of the Ordinal, "Doctrine, Sacraments, and Discipline." I am only engaged with the first, directly, at this time, viz.: the ministering of the doctrine of Christ, "as this Church hath received the same."

The remark is frequently made, in the loose and careless way which is apt to characterize the popular discussion of all religious topics, that "this Church" admits and encourages a wide latitude of opinion among her clergy and people, touching matters of religious belief. While it must be said of the spirit which too often gives character to the remark, that it is undoubtedly out of harmony with the traditional mind of the Church, I am, nevertheless, far from wishing to deny that there is a range of considerable extent within which diversity is allowable. But this range has its distinct boundaries, as Christian history fully testifies.

It is obvious, however, from this very distinc-

tion, that the existence of a large and systematic body of doctrine is presupposed, which is neither doubtful nor debateable, but of the essence of the faith; and it would be an extremely moderate suggestion of what may be regarded as the minimum of this body of doctrine, to say that it includes the first ten Articles of Religion (inclusive of the English Article, which treats of the three Symbols of the Christian faith), together with the Articles relating to the Sacraments, the Preface to the Ordinal, and the Ordinal itself. Yet, moderate as this suggestion is of the limits of what is absolutely necessary for the people to believe, and the clergy to teach on peril of canonical disobedience and breach of moral responsibility in denying the faith, it is noteworthy that men in the Church's Orders have not scrupled to question, and even to deny and teach others to deny, much that is contained within these limits.

Let me, in this connection, call your attention to one or two examples of doctrine necessary to be taught because received by this Church, and as illustrating, at the same time, the carefulness with which she has anticipated and not one of these modern presentations of a very old heresy. I am quoting from the Article, "Of the Resurrection of Christ." "Christ," says the Church in this Article, "did truly rise again from death," *de mortuis*, "and took again His body, with flesh, bones and all things appertaining to the perfection" *integritatem* "of man's nature."

So again in the Creed: "He rose again from the dead." Not simply, "He rose," as if in a phantom body not before possessed by Him, but *resurrexit*, rose back or again to the earth on which His body had lived and moved before, then had died and been buried, and put into the grave from which it was to rise once more. And with this body prefigured as has been always believed, in the Transfiguration on the Mount, the Article goes on to say, "He ascended into heaven." No doubt there is profound mystery in this; the mystery of a body which was the first-fruits of the promised resurrection hereafter, and which, as such, existed under new and spiritual laws, in new and spiritual conditions.

But it is beyond all question a trifling with the integrity and simplicity of language and a breach of moral responsibility of the gravest kind, when men who are not armed with knowledge on such subjects, are led by their trusted teachers "in this Church" to deny any article of belief like this one of the Resurrection of Christ's Body, which is so plainly taught with iteration in Holy Scripture, and has been received as *de fide* in the Church, *semper, ubique, et ab omnibus*.

If the lesson of the Creeds and of Article IV, supplies an illustration of Church and historical teaching which may not be set aside without violation of trust on the part of the clergy, still another lesson, equally to the point, is furnished by the Church's doctrine of the MINISTRY, than which, none other is more clearly set forth in language, illustrated by history, or enforced by the undeviating practice of Christendom for the fifteen centuries immediately following the Apostolic age.

The Preface to the Ordinal viewed especially in connection with Article XXIII "Of Ministering in the Congregation," all the past teaching and practice of the Universal Church, the Canon Law frequently repeated, together with unvary-

ing usage of the Church of England from the remoter days of the Saxon rule, when Augustine in the south, and Columba and Aidan in the north, were the divinely chosen instruments for introducing and establishing Christianity in the land; the law and usage of our own American Branch; all these furnish testimony too clear and overwhelming for any question to be raised in this day, as to what the teaching and law of the Church require of her clergy. Any one who ventures to contravene this mind and teaching while continuing still to hold the office which she gave as a sacred trust, must and does incur serious moral responsibility in doing so. The best that can be said in extenuation when such offences occur is, that the nicer sense of moral duty has been obscured in the offender by prejudice or ignorance. And every one who is able to think fairly and then form a clear moral judgment, will see that when offences like these are overlooked for the time, and the grievous pain and distress which they inflict are borne for the Church's sake, that this is but the transfer of the case from the court of ecclesiastical judgment to that of official honour; a transfer to be understood and appreciated only by those who acknowledge the authority and jurisdiction of the last.

I do not think, that such denials, of fundamental and necessary truth, are as a rule, to be met and overcome by controversy. It is scarcely possible to hold a sustained argument with those who to be consistent with themselves must deny almost every Churchly premiss, leaving us no common ground to occupy. Let us rather with earnest endeavour to stay the spreading of so serious an evil, fall back upon the ground which should never have been abandoned by us, and become once more as pastors and teachers, not the mere occupants of pulpits on a Sunday or a Festival; but the every day spiritual teachers of the people committed to our care.

In an age prolific of books beyond any other which has gone before, it is as a rule, more difficult to persuade people to read those which discuss and explain religion than it was thirty years ago. Again there is little room for doubt that our Sunday school system is seriously defective. Debates on *Methods* do not reach the evil. It is with a teacher in a Sunday school very much as it is with the clergyman himself, personal qualities and aptitudes are of great importance. A man to be successful must first be able to interest those whom he is trying to teach; and the Sunday school teacher must depend largely upon instruction given by the clergyman point by point, and patiently, in doctrine, sacraments, ministry and liturgy, as well as in the practical duties of life, for the accuracy and comprehensiveness of that which is imparted to the young people of the parish, consigned too often by the culpable negligence or indifference of parents to the Sunday school, for whatever religious instruction they receive.

If it be true, as is commonly said, that the spirit of scepticism is abroad, then the need is all the greater for instruction by the clergy—more constant and particular than ever before in "the faith once delivered to the saints." Some very excellent people, whose general intelligence and sincerity I would not call in question, are prompt to deprecate and even to censure what they call "doctrinal preaching." But if people will neither read religious books nor tolerate what is said in the way of doctrinal teaching in the pulpit, how is the evil of scepticism to be met and arrested?

The truth is, that the faithful clergy in this day are assigned a task as difficult as it is delicate. The people are to be taught, and yet are often unwilling to receive instruction. They do not apprehend, in any just degree, the gravity and imminence of the common danger; or, if