

# The Church Guardian

— EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR: —

L. H. DAVIDSON, D.C.L., MONTREAL.

— ASSOCIATE EDITOR: —

REV. EDWYN S.W. PENTREATH, B.D., Winnipeg, Man.

Address Correspondence and Communications to the Editor, P.O. Box 504. Exchanges to P.O. Box 1968. For Business announcements See page 14.

## DECISIONS REGARDING NEWSPAPERS.

1. Any person who takes a paper regularly from the Post office, whether directed to his own name or another's, or whether he has subscribed or not, is responsible for payment.
2. If a person orders his paper discontinued must pay all arrears, or the publisher may continue to send it until payment is made, and then collect the whole amount, whether the paper is taken from the office or not.
3. In suits for subscriptions, the suit may be instituted in the place where the paper is published although the subscriber may reside hundreds of miles away.
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 MAY.

- MAY 1st—St. Philip and St. James. A. & M.  
 " 5th—2nd Sunday after Easter.  
 " 12th—3rd Sunday after Easter.  
 " 19th—4th Sunday after Easter.  
 " 26th—5th Sunday after Easter.

[Notice of Rogation Days and of Ascension Day].

- " 27th—  
 " 28th—  
 " 29th— } Rogation Days.  
 " 30th—Ascension Day. Pr. Pss. M. P. 15  
 21; Evg. 24, 47, 108. Athanasian Creed. In Communion Service, Pr. Pref. till June 6th, inclusive.

## HOME REUNION.

(A PAPER READ BY THE REV. PREBENDARY BOBBEE AT THE LICHFIELD DIOCESAN CONFERENCE.)

Can the sects, diverse and divergent, again become united to The Church and to each other? This, as I take it, is Home Reunion. For it is for no new Church, no 'Church of the future,' indeed, that we are seeking. But can these religious bodies be again united to the Church of God in this country? Can they be brought back to their mother? It is strange. They come to her for the most part in death. For however widely the baptized man may have wandered through the devious parts of Nonconformity, he is received by the Church for the last office with the words—'This our dear brother.' A Nonconformist all his days, yet a 'dear brother' in death! May he not be a dear brother in life? Can he and we be dear brethren, not for the silence of the grave, but for the activities of life? This is Home Reunion as I take it. The point of view being confined to the Church of England and other religious bodies in this country;

I. Is Home Reunion desirable?

II. Is Home Reunion possible?

III. Can The Church forward it?

But to clear the ground for the answers I must notice two things.

(a) When we propose to ourselves a movement for reunion, it is not in any wise to be thought of as a movement for causing union (that is far above us,) but only manifesting it. For though union is manifested in outward fellowship and mutual co-operation, union *does not consist* in this visible fellowship, as Mr. Gore shows in his recent work—*Roman Catholic Claims*, pp. 24–30. Union consists in the possession of the same life. 'What makes Christians one is an inward fact, the possession of the one life, and unity of the Spirit.' All believers in the Son of God who are baptized are one, wherever in the denominations they may be. This oneness arises from *possessing one life in Jesus Christ*. This union is the work of Christ the Lord, by the Presence and Power of the Holy Spirit—'the unity of the Spirit.' Man cannot in any wise make this union, nor increase it, nor interfere with it, nor hinder it. It flows from the Divine Will, is maintained by the Eternal Spirit, its pattern is the Union of the Holy Trinity. And it is being carried on hour by hour without the smallest check from men or devils, to be manifested in due time. For, indeed, the Most High is not experimenting in this world. The Eternal Son is not doing His best with a system of things which has failed, as if, now, He could only bring forth something less perfect than the first Divine Idea. He is silently rearing through the changing years the City of God, at unity in itself; every stone in that City 'living' with His own Life. And, hour by hour, never thwarted, the self-will of the creature only bringing out more clearly the triumphant issue of His purpose, stone by stone is being added according to the Divine Predestination, till, the number of the elect being accomplished, the City of God shines forth to the glory of God. It seems to me of the last importance to keep this clear in all our thoughts of reunion, that life, a common life, alone makes union. The giving of life is never in the hands of the creature, but the manifestation of life is. And it is here that the freedom of the creature comes in. Brothers are brothers still, though seas divide them; or, though sword in hand they slay each other. They did not make their one common life, and they cannot unmake it, do what they will. It is theirs to manifest it. It is not ours to make the Unity of the Spirit; that is far above us. But it is ours to *keep the unity of the Spirit*. Here then, is the first thing to be noted in the call for reunion. It is for the manifestation of a life which already exists. For we would never trouble our heads or our hearts about Nonconformity, were it not that Nonconformists are Christians. But it is just because Nonconformists are Christian that Nonconformity is *un-Christian*. It is the *fact* of the possession of the *one life* which makes the divided position so sad, so disastrous. But, blessed be God! it is the very fact of possessing the one life, and union in it, which provides the enduring basis for the call to manifest that union in visible fellowship and mutual co-operation.

(b) To manifest this *one life* we do not desire uniformity. Reunion in outward fellowship can never be on the basis of uniformity. On the contrary, uniformity would destroy the manifestation of the highest kind of unity, which is unity in diversity. The Catholic Church does not want a dead level where all is uniform. Co-operation is the true manifestation of union in the one life. The human body is the divinely chosen type of the Body of Christ, which is the Church. Is there any uniformity between the eye and the foot? But there is perfect unity, and therefore, mutual co-operation. How great the diversity in the body! How divine the functions of the eye, the tongue, the ear, the foot! But how perfect the organic unity in which they all consist, and which is manifested in mutual co-operation and service. Therefore, when we speak of reunion, we must not call up before our minds a manifestation absorbing and curbing all life into one uniform movement. Nonconformity might keep its various modes

of action, if it would own to the One Body by receiving Ordination for its ministers, and sanction for its systems, at the hands of the Historic Episcopate of the Church, so using its diversities of operations under the One Lord for the One Body. These, then, seem to me important ever to keep in mind:—All believers in the Son of God who are baptized are *one*, for they all have the same life in Christ the Lord. This life was not theirs to make, nor is theirs to impart. But the *manifestation* of this life is committed to the freedom of the creature. The manifestation of this one life is not to be seen in uniformity, but in mutual co-operation: organic unity in diversity.

I. *Is Home Reunion Desirable?*—Of all things the most desirable in this our England to-day; for all these things, division among Christians is the most mischievous, the head and front of the hindrance to the world's conversion, perplexing the weak, disturbing the saints, staying the outflow of divine benediction. But I will content myself on this point in quoting the remarkable words of an eminent Nonconformist, Professor Milligan:—

'As regards Unity, it can hardly be denied that the Church of our time is flagrantly and disastrously at fault. The spectacle presented by her to the world is in direct and palpable contradiction to the unity of the Person of her Lord. And she would at once discover its sinfulness were she not too exclusively occupied with the thought of positive action on the world, instead of remembering that her primary and most important duty is to offer to the world a visible representation of her exalted Head. What the Church ought to possess is a Unity which the eyes can see. If she is to be a witness to her risen Lord, she must do more than talk of unity; more than console herself with the hope that the world will not forget the invisible bond by which it is pleaded that all her members are bound together into one. Visible unity in one form or another is an essential mark of her faithfulness. Without it she cannot fulfil her mission; nay, the very aim, in the thought of which she finds consolation for the loss of unity, will be itself defeated, for the world will never be converted by a disunited Church. Even Bible circulation and missionary exertion on the largest scale will be powerless to convert it, unless accompanied by the strength which unity alone can give. Let the Church of Christ once feel in any measure corresponding to its importance that she is the representative of the Risen Lord, and she will no longer be satisfied with outward action; she will see that her first and most imperative duty is to heal herself, that she may be able to heal others.' (*Resurrection of our Lord*, pp. 204–9.)

II. *Is Home Reunion Possible?*—Ah! we must listen for the answer in these words, 'Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them.' Is it possible? The answer lies in—Is it desired? It is impossible if undesired. Is it desirable? A great Nonconformist has given the answer. Then, is it desired? Then, we must inquire of our most patient God to do for us. Here lies, it seems to me, the only source of possibility. For is there a man on earth who can lift a finger, or speak a word, to tell us how Christians are to become one again? But if all spiritual souls in the sects were feeling what Dr. Milligan has so keenly expressed; if all spiritual souls in the Church were bearing this burden, and each and all were crying to the Lord for this thing, how near, how near would be the festival of our reconciliation!

III. *Can the Church of England forward it?*—Yes, greatly, in two ways. I. By keeping the subject continually before the minds of her own children and of those outside her borders. This seems to me the immense value of placing Home Reunion as one of the subjects on the agenda of a Diocesan Conference. It forces on our attention the fact of the divided condition of Christians: it compels us to ask, 'Is there