

The Church Guardian,

A WEEKLY NEWSPAPER

Published in the interests of the Church of England.

NON-PARTIZAN!

INDEPENDENT!

It will be fearless and outspoken on all subjects, but its effort will always be to speak what it holds to be the truth in love.

EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR: REV. JOHN D. H. BROWNE, Lock Drawer 20, HALIFAX, N. S.

ASSOCIATE EDITOR: REV. EDWYN S. W. PENTREATH, WINNIPEG, MANITOBA.

A staff of correspondents in every Diocese in the Dominion. Price, ONE DOLLAR AND A HALF a year in advance.

The Cheapest Church Weekly in America. Circulation double that of any other Church paper in the Dominion.

Address: THE CHURCH GUARDIAN, Lock Drawer 20, HALIFAX, N. S.

The Editor may be found between the hours of 9 a. m. and 1 p. m., and 2 and 6 p. m., at his office, No. 54 Granville Street, (up-stairs), directly over the Church of England Institute.

The Associate Editor can be found daily between 9 a. m. and 12 at the Branch Office, 515½ Main Street, Winnipeg, opposite City Hall.

THE PROVINCIAL SYNOD.

ON Wednesday, the 12th of September, or in little more than a fortnight's time, the Provincial Synod of the Ecclesiastical Province of Canada will be in Session in the City of Montreal. It is almost impossible to over-estimate the great importance that attaches to this Triennial Meeting of the deliberative and legislative Assembly of the Church of Christ in Canada. We earnestly trust that the Session of 1883 may be characterized by that harmony which so happily marked the Session of 1880. We trust that a spirit of Christianity, and of wise and large-hearted tolerance of the opinions of others will prevail. In a Church like ours, where wide liberty of thought is allowed,—where orthodoxy prevails without narrowness, comprehension without heresy,—there always have been, and there always will be different schools of thought. The Anglican branch of the Catholic Church, while heartily accepting the Catholic Creeds, has never said to her children—"Let a man cease to examine, or cease to be a child of the Church." Therefore, on many subjects, and on some of considerable importance, there must be a healthful diversity of thought in the English branch of the Holy Catholic Church. But while there must be among us diversity of thought, and therefore different schools of thought, there surely need not be parties—party-names, party-shibboleths, party-societies, party-bonds, these are the death of charity. But surely we need none of these mementoes of party strifes, if we are all animated by the spirit of true loyalty. If we are loyal to Christ who is our Head, and loyal to our Church who is our Mother, we will be loyal to each other. The Spirit of the divine brotherhood will banish the demon of party strife; and though we see not yet eye to eye, counsels like these will fall on our listening ears—"Sirs, ye are brethren"—"See that ye fall not out by the way"—"Love one another as I have loved you. And then as we meet from time to time in our Provincial and Diocesan Synods, and in our Church Congresses, we shall realize more and more than we are brothers, working not perhaps in the same lines, nor after the same methods, but working together for the same grand end, the glory of our Divine Lord, and the advancement of His Holy Church. And the result will be,

that the on-looking would, as it marks the progress of our debates, and the course of our legislation, will be constrained to say of us as it said of the Christians of olden days—"See how these Christians love one another."

In our next issue, we purpose to touch upon some of the important matters which ought, in our judgment, to occupy the attention of our Provincial Synod.

CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES.

No. IV.

THE PERSONALITY OF GOD.

THE enemy of the Christian Faith seeks to maintain that we can know nothing worth calling knowledge on such a subject as the Personality of God. We need to shew that our knowledge of God is a true knowledge, based upon evidence worthy of acceptance by a rational mind.

J. S. Mill has stated the principle that "the truth or falsity of an opinion upon a momentous subject resolves itself, to us, into the sufficiency of the evidence on which it rests." An undoubted position; but there immediately follow two questions. First, *to whom* sufficient; secondly, in *what sense* sufficient.

Evidence which satisfies the scientist often falls far short of satisfaction to the less logically trained mind, and *vice versa*, the evidence which satisfies the ordinary reasonable mind is unacceptable to the exacting logician. Yet to both classes of men, to the scientist as to the ordinary thinker, evidence rests on authority.

Science rests on assumptions, on the use of terms which represent absolute mysteries. The scientist cannot go behind those mysteries. On the authority of those in whose dicta he has confidence, the scientist accepts the assumptions, and thereupon he builds his scientific theorems.

The moment Science deals with realities, it becomes a realm of uncertainty. For example take the scientific doctrine of Matter; certain rules as to the relations of Matter can scientifically, by experience, as far as man can trace experience, be established, but the primal questions, What is matter? what is gravitation? carry the scientist back into the realms of uncertainty. He cannot explain them any more than the Christian believer can explain the Personality of God.

The evidence for the Personality of God is sufficient as an *assured conviction* for the demands of a moral and responsible creature. The evidence for the Personality of God is sometimes known under the name of Theistic arguments. We will divide it thus:

a. *Metaphysical.* An idea of God is in my mind. That idea is. The idea is either necessary or not necessary. Even if I am unable to account for the idea, and prove it to have had any other origin than the law of my own thought, still the idea exists, and so am I not compelled to think of the infinite, the absolute, the eternal, as a *Being*. This was the reasoning of a very great metaphysician a thousand years ago. He was a Platonist, and he took this line: "There is in the human intellect the idea of a Being than whom nothing greater can be conceived. If so, it cannot be in the intellect alone, for if it is in the intellect it can be conceived of as being also in reality, and if it be not a reality, then it is greater in the intellect than it is in reality; that is, the

intellect which conceives the Divine is itself Divine."

Again, "I am necessitated to think of God, and that thought is confirmed by other evidences. I may well believe that that necessity is derived from the universe and not from myself alone."

Again. "First. The idea of God is the idea of the Infinite. It cannot, therefore, have come from the Finite. Hence there must be an Infinite."

"Secondly. The idea of God involves the idea of necessary existence; a reality corresponding to it is therefore necessary."

Dr. Samuel Clarke, in the Boyle Lectures of 1704-5, sums up an argument for the Being and attributes of God thus:—"Admitting that something now is, it must have a cause, a reason, a ground of its existence. That ground of its existence must be in the necessity of its own nature, or in the existence of some other Being; in either case we must assume existence as eternal. Something has existed from eternity. *Ex nihilo nihil fit*."

We have given a sample of the mode of the metaphysical argument. It is but right to say that this argument for Theism would, if it stood alone, be at least weak. Indeed the Materialists have used the same motto, *Ex nihilo nihil fit*, to establish the eternity of matter, but we have got to consider the other lines of Theistic argument, which, when worked together, and in harmony with the metaphysical, form all that the reasonable creature should demand, an assured conviction of the truth.

DEPRIVATION OF MR. MACKONOCHE.

A WRITER in *Church Bells*, whose well-known initials point him out as Prebendary Venables, Vicar of Great Yarmouth, has contributed a strong article upon this subject in a recent number. As the matter concerns, to some extent, at least, the Canadian Church, and as Mr. Venables is recognized as a moderate and conservative Churchman, we give below what he says. It is as follows:—

"No thoughtful man, wishing well to the Church of God in England, can look with satisfaction upon the proceedings in the Law Court of Lord Penzance on Saturday last, whether he be willing to regard it as a legitimately existing court or not. The promoters of the suit against Mr. Mackonochie have been guilty of an offence against common charity and of a violation of common sense; and it is difficult to account for their proceedings except upon a belief that they are stimulated by a spirit of personal rancour and virulence such as is unworthy of Christian people in the support of Christian truth. Common charity might surely have suggested that, at least, it would be kind to wait until the Commission touching the present unsatisfactory state of the Ecclesiastical Courts had had time to give advice upon the subject. Common charity, even of the lowest type, might have said to the keen promoters that it is notorious that Mr. Mackonochie is as law-abiding a man as any of themselves, but that, like very many more people, he believes Lord Penzance's court to be an illegal court, without any right in law or justice to take action in any Church case whatever; and that under such a condition of things the promoters might have awaited the expected Report, which would possibly put all these matters to rest. But charity, or kindness, nobler