

The Church Guardian

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CALENDAR FOR NOVEMBER.

- Nov. 1st—All Saints' Day.
 " 3rd—20th Sunday after Trinity.
 " 10th—21st Sunday after Trinity.
 " 17th—22nd Sunday after Trinity.
 " 24th—Sunday next before Advent.
 23rd Sunday after Trinity. (Notice of St. Andrew, Coll. Ep. & Gosp. for 25th Sunday after Trinity.)
 " 30th—St. ANDREW. A. & M. (Athanasian Creed).

A MODERN BABEL.

BY R. V. W. IN "THE CHURCH CRITIC."

In our last article we saw that the Protestant sects obtained the Holy Scriptures from the very Church they were protesting against, and that the canonicity of the books in our Bible really rested on the authority of that same Church. We are inclined to think that it is rather ungrateful to accept a present, as valuable as God's Word is, from the Church and then reject the Church. Possibly our dissenting friends will say that they do not mean to reject the Church, but only the errors of the Church. Admitting that the Church is and has been corrupt, this does not warrant separation from it. When a man renovates his house he does not tear it down or abandon it and go to another house. He cleanses it from within, keeping intact all that is essential. Errors in the Church should be got rid of in the same way—by abiding in the Church, not by deserting it and forming many sects. When the Church of England reformed herself, she did it from within. She did not start a new church or a new religion. She merely retained the old Catholic religion purified. The Protestants, on the other hand, not merely protested against the Church of Rome, but also against the reformed Church of England. Rejecting Apostolic Succession and Episcopal government, they severed all connection with the past. They took the Bible from the Church, interpreted it to suit their own idiosyncrasies, and started a number of religious communities, which have since split up among themselves. If this is the correct and

Scriptural presentment of Christianity, we ought to find in the Bible some warrant for the divisions in Christendom and the setting up of rival religious organizations. "To the law and to the testimony" let us go; "if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

In this article we propose to consider the subject of *schism*. The word *schism* comes from the Greek word *schisma*, meaning a division, a cutting off; hence our English word *scissors*.

At the present time, owing to the divisions in Christendom, to the tolerant spirit of the age, and to a great indifference to religion, *schism* is not regarded as a sin. The prevalent idea seems to be that every one is to judge for himself in matters of faith. If his connections lead him to be a Methodist, he is to be a Methodist; if to be a Baptist, he is to be a Baptist; and so on. Christian people seem to have forgotten that *schism* is a sin and is contrary to God's Word. When once we realize that Christ instituted a visible Church on earth, which was to be the human agent for carrying out His plans for the regeneration of mankind, and that He did not found a dozen or fifty antagonistic sects, but one Church, we can then obtain some clear idea of the nature of *schism*.

The history of *schism* is co-existent with the history of the Jewish and Christian Churches. In the history of the kingdom of Israel, the sin of rebellion, or the sin of worshipping false gods, are not the ones most strongly denounced by the Holy Spirit. Rather it is a sin peculiar to the kingdom of Israel, and is invariably specified as the sin of Jeroboam. If we consult the Old Testament account, we will see that the sin was that of idolatrous *schism*. "Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David: if this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam, king of Judah. Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And he set up the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan. And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan. And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi" (1 Kings 12: 26-31). The object of Jeroboam was not to cast off the worship of Jehovah, for he offered to the Israelites at Bethel and Dan all that they enjoyed at the Temple at Jerusalem.

There are those who think the sin of Jeroboam was the breaking of the Second Commandment. Even if we take this view of it, there remains this one fact: God had appointed Jerusalem as the city where He was to place His name (1 Kings 11: 36). Therefore the Israelites were to go to offer sacrifice in the Temple. Now, this was the very thing Jeroboam endeavored to prevent by setting up the calves at Bethel and Dan. And he not only thus set up a schismatical worship, but he started a priesthood of his own, made "of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi." He adhered as closely as he could to the old religion, even observing the very feast that was observed in Judah. "And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah, and he offered upon the altar." He did not wish to introduce a false worship, but a separate worship. His sin was the worship of God in an unauthorized way, in unauthorized places, and with unauthorized ministers. The principles of modern Dissent are closely analogous to those of Jeroboam.

We come now to this important inquiry: How did God regard the worship Jeroboam "devised of his own heart"? Did He approve or disapprove of it? "Behold, there came a

man of God out of Judah by the word of the Lord unto Bethel; and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense. And he cried against the altar in the word of the Lord. * * * And it came to pass, when King Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, which had cried against the altar in Bethel, that he put forth his hand from the altar, saying, Lay hold on him. And his hand which he put forth against him, dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to him. The altar also was rent, and the ashes poured out from the altar." Are we wrong in inferring that "the good and acceptable and perfect will of God" was that His chosen people were to worship Him at Jerusalem in the way that He had appointed, and that to worship Him otherwise, in a way of man's devising, was a sin?

As it is not right to "so expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another," we will cite other instances from the Bible of unauthorized worship and how God regarded such worship. The first example will be that of Korah, Dathan and Abiram. These three, together with two hundred and fifty men of Israel, came to Moses and Aaron and said: "Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them; wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?" (Num. 16: 3). Korah was one of the Levites who waited on the priests at the tabernacle, and he was desirous of being a priest and endeavored to usurp that office. Moses put the matter to the test, and Korah, Dathan and Abiram, together with the two hundred and fifty men, took censers and put fire and incense in them, and did as the priests did in the tabernacles. "And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the Lord hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind. If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; then the Lord hath not sent me. But if the Lord make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the Lord. And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them; and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah and all their goods." Thus did God punish Korah for taking upon himself the office of priest.

We will now cite an instance of *schism* or schismatical worship from the New Testament. It can safely be maintained that the Divine Master was no dissenter from the Jewish Church or worship. We read that He "entered into the synagogue on the Sabbath day as was His custom"; that He "taught daily in the temple"; that He told the lepers to go and show themselves "unto the priests"; that He said unto His own disciples, "The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat; all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works; for they say and do not"; and that He said that He had come not "to destroy the law, or the prophets," but to fulfil them. We can find no instance in our Lord's life where He gave, by precept or example, any reason for withdrawing from the Jewish Church, because it was corrupt, and setting up a separate communion.

The Samaritans, in our Lord's time, occupied a place in the centre of the Holy Land. They were a mixed population, composed of Jews, Israelites and Gentiles. They worshipped the true God; they looked for the Messiah; they read the Scriptures, and observed the law of Moses. When the temple at Jerusalem was to be rebuilt, they offered to assist, but their offer was rejected by the Jews. They then did all in their power to hinder the work of rebuilding, and finally built a temple of their own: on