

The Church Guardian,

A WEEKLY NEWSPAPER, PUBLISHED
IN THE INTERESTS OF THE
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Address, THE CHURCH GUARDIAN,
Lock Drawer 29, Halifax, N. S.

The Halifax Editor can 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 ENGLISH CHURCH CONGRESS.

THE Church Congress, which this year meets at
Newcastle-on-Tyne, inaugurated its twenty-first
Anniversary on the 4th instant. Our London Cor-
respondent, who is on the spot for the occasion,
sends us an extremely interesting account of the
opening proceedings, which came just too late for
last week, but which is still fresh, and will be read
with great interest. He says:—

NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE, Oct. 5, 1881.

My readers will perceive I date my "London
Letter" this week out of its usual latitude. I do
this for the purpose of following the Church Con-
gress to its halting-place, thinking that the readers
of this column would be interested in the doings of
that august body.

In one of his Latter-day Pamphlets, Carlyle
points out the growth of the Christian Church from
a small seed-grain to a tree so broad that "no star
can be seen but through it," and then, assuming the
mantle of a prophet sterner than Elijah, exclaims,
"Shaken to and fro in Jesuitisms, Gorham contro-
versies, and the storms of inevitable Fate, it must
sway hither and thither, nod ever farther from the
perpendicular; nod at last too far, and—sweeping
the Eternal Heaven clear of its old brown foliage
and multitudinous rooks'-nests—come to the
ground with much confused crashing, and disclose
the diurnal and nocturnal Upper Lights again."

It is now twenty-one years ago since the first
Church Congress met at Cambridge. It was then
but little more than a local gathering in the hall of
King's College, under the presidency of the Arch-
deacon of Ely, and was thought so insignificant that
the proceeding were only reported in the journals
published locally; whereas now the institution holds
its meetings under circumstances which attract the
notice of all who take an interest in religious
matters. The two English Archbishops are its
patrons, a bishop acts as President, and the leading
intellect of the Church, both lay and clerical, and
of all schools of thought, take part in its discussions.
But the Congress has no legislative functions what-
ever, being in this respect with similar gatherings
of the Dissenting bodies. It meets for speech and
separates without action, save such as arises from
the silent influences of wise and weighty opinion.

The 21st anniversary of the Church Congress
was inaugurated yesterday in this town, and bids
fair to rival, if not out-do, previous meetings of
Congress. The visitors are quartered in what may
be called the out-parts of Newcastle, Tynemouth,
North and South Shields, and Sunderland, and also
at the cathedral city of Durham, which will presently
have to share its functions with the Bishopric of
Northumberland, whose endowment fund has been
completed by the translation of a canonry of Dur-
ham to that of its sister county. Early morning
services were held at Durham and in all the parish
churches of Newcastle, but the first official gather-
ing in connection with the congress was the assem-
blage of the principal members in the Town-hall,
where they robed and walked in procession to St.
Nicholas Church, which is shortly to become the
Metropolitan Church of the diocese of Northumber-
land. There was a crowd of the townspeople to
watch the imposing procession, and the sun shone
forth dispelling the clouds which had threatened to
mar the proceedings. The Bishop of Manchester
preached an eloquent sermon from the Revised
Version—Ephesians iii. 8-12. He said that the
days of the greatest increase of the Church were
years of peace—not days of strife when the faith
had won its way, not because it had received the
sanction of Ecumenical Councils, but by its own
intrinsic power to persuade the souls of men—be-
fore the Articles got to be too curiously defined, or
schools of religious thought formed themselves and
labelled each other with human names; a golden
age, indeed, of peace and charity and progress,
which the perverseness and self-will of men "seeking
their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's,"
first disturbed and then destroyed. Has it, like
other golden ages, become a thing of the past,

perished, never to return? If it were, he feared
the Church's power for conquest would have per-
ished too. The three most truly fundamental prin-
ciples of the Church, as given by St. Paul, were
love, unity, and the true function of the Christian
ministry. Taking love first, he asked whether they
should promote this virtue by the congress which
had brought together so many hundred Churchmen,
representatives of almost every school of Christian
thought. It was to be hoped that the outer world,
when it read and criticised their proceedings, would
have no cause to reverse the verdict of an earlier
age, and to say with scorn, "See those Christians;
how they hate one another." Passing from the note
of love to that of unity, from the soil in which faith
grew to the fruit which it produced, he said that
they must build their Church on the primitive creed,
for on no other basis could they embrace the whole
world in the face of the rapid and violent disintegra-
tion of Christian belief. With M. Rochefort in
Paris parodying the Christian Sacrament, and the
International Federation of Freethinkers holding its
three days' conference in London, and delighting to
trample on some of the most cherished hopes of
man, by announcing that the Union Democratique
of France was organizing a great free-thought de-
monstration on All Souls' Day, they could not
afford to bandy words upon disputable propositions,
to divide themselves into diverse and almost hostile
camps, each with its doctrine and interpretation.
They dare not break up a great Church, with its
mission as clearly stamped upon it as ever mission
was stamped upon a Church, planted even by the
Apostles' hands, into fragmentary and partizan
organizations, powerless because disunited; incap-
able of discipline because following the voice of no
one leader, and recognizing the sound of no one
battle cry. If union ever were strength it was
strength now, and union was only possible on the
broad basis of an historical and not a theoretic
Christianity. The Bishop next asked what was the
function of men under these circumstances. At
present the people were not seeking priests to ab-
solve or offer sacrifice for them, but prophets who
could teach and guide them. Prophets, evangelists,
pastors, teachers, those were the records of the
Church to-day. If anyone could not see that the
Church was passing through a crisis now—fiercer,
sharper, and more intense than any one which had
tried her for generations—he could not read the
most obvious signs of the times. They must follow
in the footsteps of the fathers of the Church, who
stirred the hearts of their generation and made religion
an alluring force, and not a crystallized tradi-
tion, possible in the world. He concluded by an
appeal to the liberality of Churchmen to subscribe
to the fund for the endowment of the proposed
bishopric for Northumberland.

The real business of the Congress, however, was
commenced in the Town-hall, where the Mayor of
Newcastle, a prominent Nonconformist, welcomed
the visitors, and declared the wish of the corpora-
tion to give them every facility for carrying on the
congress.

The Bishop of Durham then stood forth, and be-
fore an audience of between 3,000 and 4,000 peo-
ple delivered his inaugural address. There were
vast numbers outside who could not gain admittance,
and for the entertainment of these, meetings were
held in the smaller rooms. In delivering his ad-
dress the Bishop said that the Church Congress in
its infancy was fitly cradled beneath the academic
shades of Cambridge and Oxford. It now no less
fitly celebrated its robust maturity in a busy port
town of the rough and hardy North. The report
of their first congress was eminently suggestive as
read by the light of twenty years' experience. It
embodied hopes and fears alike unfulfilled. For in-
stance, of the burning question of Church rates,
not even a spark of the fire which once threatened
to become a mighty conflagration lived in its ashes
at the present day, yet the fabrics of the churches
were never so numerous and so sound. As to the
question of the increase of the episcopate, it was
still one of living and lively interest, and nowhere
so lively as in the huge, overgrown Northern dio-
cese. The present year was full of significance for
the synchronisms which it offered, and supplied
food for suggestions and warnings which would re-
mind Churchmen of the great responsibilities and
destinies of the Church. In a thousand ways the
spread of railways altered the condition of life, and
with the vast and varied results of this new and
potent force, especially in the parochial system, they
must deal in such a manner as to subdue and re-
duce all to order. Again, in the recent meeting of
the British Association in the Northern provinces
they were reminded of the revolution in the intel-
lectual world which had taken place in our own
time, and here also they were confronted with a
giant force, of which the Church of Christ must give
an account. Before all things they should learn
from the lessons of the past to keep free from dis-
trust and dismay. The scares regarding recent ad-
vances in astronomical and geological science had
passed away, and theological conceptions had been
corrected and engaged by their teachings, and now
in turn biology concentrated the same interests
and excited the same distrusts; but would not his-
tory here repeat itself?

A third synchronism, not less suggestive than the
others, though in a different light, was to be found
in the Ecumenical Methodist Conference, echoes
of which were still lingering in their ears. What
lessons of organization, sympathy, and adaptation
did this not give to the Church, and why, he would
ask, should not this great spiritual mechanism have

been retained within the Church to which it owed
its being? Could not the same results have been
purchased at a less heavy sacrifice than the loss of
unity? Coming to the congress and its programme,
he said they had avoided no question because it
was a burning one. They did not moderate the
tension of feeling in the Church at the present
moment, but they were determined to give to all
parties fair and equal opportunities of expressing
their opinions on the subject.

KING'S COLLEGE AND THE COLLEGIATE SCHOOL, WINDSOR.

WE have much pleasure in stating that the
Governors of King's College, at their late meeting
at Windsor, inspected the Collegiate School; and
we are authorized to add that they were much
pleased with the results of their examination.

It is much to be regretted that parents do not
more generally avail themselves of its advantages
for their sons, for Mr. Willets, to whom it has
been committed by the Governors, was a Scholar on
the foundation of his College at Cambridge, and
has proved his ability to teach by the proficiency
of the pupils whom he has sent up to the College
for matriculation. Members of the Church of
England may well be expected to support their own
Institutions in the Province, but are constantly
sending their sons away to other more distant
schools, when they may obtain for them a thorough
education to prepare them either for professional
studies or for commercial pursuits in a school con-
nected with their own University.

A donation of \$1000 towards the Endowment
Fund from Dr. Charles Cogswell was announced at
the meeting; but few of those who are more im-
mediately interested in the welfare of the College
have, as yet, responded to the urgent appeal ad-
dressed to them, and we understand that no general
canvass of these Provinces has yet been made, in
consequence of the inability of the Committee to
find suitable agents to undertake the work, which
must, however, be accomplished without much
longer delay, if our venerable Institution is to be
preserved.

THE BISHOP OF NOVA SCOTIA AND ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH.

A LETTER was lately published in the Halifax
Morning Chronicle stating that the Bishop had pub-
licly "denounced the conduct of the past consecutive
ministers" of St. George's Parish. As his Lordship
has not taken any notice of this letter, we have his
authority for stating that, far from "denouncing"
the clergymen named in the letter, he expressed his
appreciation of the good work done by them, of the
crowded congregations and excellent Sunday Schools
under the ministry of the Rev. Fitzgerald Uniacke
and his assistants, contrasting them with the present
notoriously altered condition of the Parish, attribut-
ing the failure of the late Rector rather to his ill
health than to any other defect.

At the same time his Lordship desired the
Parishioners (to whom alone as represented by the
congregation before him his remarks were ad-
dressed) to remember when electing a successor
that a marked change has taken place in the feel-
ings and tastes of the present generation, and that
if they would retain the young people in the con-
gregation they must have regard to the altered cir-
cumstances, since the tone and style of ministra-
tions, which were very successful fifty years ago,
may be insufficient to satisfy the cravings and to
secure the adherence of those for whom provision
is now to be made.

We think persons with any knowledge of the
facts will not hesitate to endorse his Lordship's
views. St. Paul's Church took advantage of the
generosity of that liberal hearted and liberal minded
man, the late Edward Binney, to make provision
for improving the services so as to adapt them to
the altered circumstances to which the Bishop
refers; and it will be simply ordinary wisdom for
St. George's Parish, now that it has the opportunity,
to fill its Rectory with a man of modern views and
modern ways, moderate, but firm and decided in
upholding and promulgating, by all lawful means,
the Apostolic position and the Scriptural doctrines
of the Church of England.

"A MONTREAL RECTOR" may rest assured that it
was a misunderstanding, and not in any way
wilfulness, which led our Montreal correspondent to
speak as he did of the Harvest Festival. The ex-
planation now given will satisfy our readers that the
repetition of the Service was in itself unobjection-
able.

THE BISHOP OF LIVERPOOL AND THE WESLEYANS.

WE are not disposed to make too much of John
Wesley's ardent language of love and affection for
the Church of England, for we cannot forget that
he promoted a great schism by going through a
ceremony whereby he constituted Mr. Ashbury
Superintendent of the Wesleyans in America, and so
gave his countenance to the schismatic action of
Ashbury and his associates in establishing a new
sect, although there is no question that he
ever loved, and never left the Church.
But when charges are made against the
Church of England of Wesley's day we may well
claim Wesley's own testimony, whenever it is given,
to be conclusive in their refutation.

Wesley's writings are full of most pointed lan-
guage eulogizing the Prayer Book, declaring his be-
lief in the Articles and Formularies of the Church
and in every doctrine contained therein. So, too,
we have his own written words which condemn the
popular notion, entertained by so many Church-
men as well as others, that he was unkindly treated
by the Church's clergy, and that the pulpits of the
Church were not open to him, and, consequently,
that he was driven out of the Church. In proof of
this, a writer in a recent number of the *London
Guardian* says:—

"I observe that the Bishop of Liverpool, in his reply to
Mr. Nevins, refers to 'the unkind treatment which John
Wesley and his people received from the Church of England
last century.' This statement is too sweeping, and should
not pass unnoticed. That John Wesley, like every other
great reformer who had set himself to oppose the tide of evil
in his own age, met with opposition and some rough treat-
ment is true enough. But it is also true that he had lived
down this feeling to a great degree, and at the time of his
death was, apparently, one of the most popular men in
England. This is a fact not so generally known, but the
proof of it is seen in the last volume of his *Journal*—*c. 6*—
here are extracts showing the courtesy of one *Bishop*, the
toleration of another, the support of the *clergy*, and the
enthusiasm of the *people*:—

"1782, Aug., Sunday, 18.—I was very much pleased
with the decent behaviour of the whole congregation in the
Cathedral (Exeter), as also with the solemn music in the
post-Communion. The Bishop inviting me to dinner, I
could not but observe:—1st. The lovely situation of the
palace, &c. 2. The plainness of the furniture, not costly
or showy, but just fit for a Christian Bishop. 3. The din-
ner sufficient, but not redundant; plain and good, but not
delicate. 4. The propriety of the company—five clergymen
and four of the aldermen. 5. The genuine and unaffected
courtesy of the Bishop, who I hope will be a blessing to his
whole diocese."

"January, 1790.—I preached in St. Luke's, our parish
church, in the afternoon, to a very numerous congregation,
on "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come." So are the
tables turned that I have now more invitations to preach in
churches than I can accept of."

"On the very last page of Mr. Wesley's *Journal* we read
as follows:—

"Oct., 1790, Tuesday, 19th.—In the evening all the
clergymen of the town (Lynn), except one who was lame,
were present at the preaching. They are all prejudiced in
favour of the Methodists, as, indeed, are most of the towns-
men, who gave a fair proof by contributing so much to our
Sunday Schools, so that there is nearly £20 in hand."

"Wednesday, 20th.—I had appointed to preach at Diss-
but the difficulty was where I could preach. The minister
was willing I should preach at the church, but feared offend-
ing the Bishop, who, going up to London, was within a few
miles of the town. But a gentleman, asking the Bishop if
he had any objection, he said, "None at all." I think this
church is one of the largest in the country. I suppose it has
not been so filled these hundred years. This evening and
the next I preached at Bury to a deeply attentive congrega-
tion, many of whom know in Whom they have believed."

"22nd.—We returned to London."

"Sunday, 24th.—I explained to a numerous congrega-
tion in Spitalfields church "the whole armour of God." St.
Paul's, Shadwell, was still more crowded in the afternoon,
while I enforced the important truth, "One thing is need-
ful." And I hope that many even then resolved to choose
the better part."

"Then follows this note:—

"Notwithstanding Mr. Wesley lived a few months longer
after this date, it does not appear that he carried his journal
any further.—FINIS."

"What evidence, I ask, remains of 'ill-treatment,' when
he had more invitations to preach in churches than he could
accept?

"2. There is also, as it seems to me, a similar inaccuracy
in identifying the present Methodists with John Wesley with-
out some strong qualification. Witness such extracts as
these from the last volume of his *Journal*, extending from
1780 to 1790:—

"Leeds.—Having five clergymen to assist me, we ad-
ministered the Lord's Supper to 1,600 or 1,700 communi-
cants."

"Sheffield.—Read prayers, preached, and administered
Sacrament to 600 or 700."

"The result of his powerful preaching was to bring men
to some definite decision, and he evidently drew them to the
Holy Communion: whether some may have received it
under undue excitement it is not possible now to decide, but
we see here a regard for Church ordinances and a standpoint
which is, of course, utterly and totally lacking in Methodism
as it now is."