

The Church Guardian,
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A MERRY CHRISTMAS!

A MERRY CHRISTMAS to our readers, one and all! *The Church Guardian* salutes its friends and well-wishers, young and old, at this festive season, and wishes them the outward and earthly joy which springs from happy reunions around the Christmas fireside, the gifts in honor of the Great Gift—God's dear son, and all the time-honored associations of Christmas-tide; and above all, the inward and spiritual happiness which can only come from an application of the doctrine of the Incarnation: "Unto you is born this day in the City of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." What a blessed truth is the fact which we commemorate that "God, for us men, and for our salvation, came down from Heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary." He came not in royal purple, or with manifestations of earthly splendor, but He touched Humanity as the poorest of the poor. He came in a mother's arms. A little child was lying there, while all the sights and sounds of earth were going on as usual; but in the air, the "squadroned angels" sang the first Christmas Carol, and the wandering Shepherds went to Bethlehem, the "House of Bread," and saw, unknown to them, the hope of all the ages, the "Redeemer," the "seed of the woman," the "Prophet, Priest and King," the "Prince of Peace," the "Everlasting God," tabernacled in human flesh, "Emmanuel, God with us." Well may the Christmas bells ring out their merriest peals, and the churches be decorated by loving hands. There is Christmas in the very air we breathe, in the happy faces that gather around the hearth; the world puts on a Christmas aspect of festivity and joy. But how much of it is a joy that has no true foundation! Earthly affections and all the good things with which God has surrounded us, are causes of rejoicing; but in our churches and our homes, let us ever remember the true meaning of Christmas joy. It is expressed outwardly in a variety of ways, but it is joy that should have its source in a Saviour born to redeem a ruined world. The very word Christmas has sole reference to Christ. And if there be any among our readers who look at vacant chairs by the hearth, or see in the corner cot or cradle, from which the curly heads and dimpled hands have lately gone to shout His praises in Paradise, there is still for them the inward happiness which surroundings cannot make or mar. The blessed dead are happy with their Lord. And the child-souls are with Him who was once a child. Need more be said? The echo of the angels' music is still floating through the world: "Peace on earth, good-will to men." "Ever o'er its Babel-sounds, the blessed angels sing." Let us rejoice to-day in their announcement of a Saviour:—

"Oh! still the jarring sounds of earth,
That round the path-way ring,
And bid the toilers rest awhile,
To hear the Angels sing."

Let our readers remember their clergyman and his family this glad season. "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

**IMPORTANT ACTION
CONTEMPLATED BY THE AMERICAN CHURCH.**

The *Living Church*, in advance of all its contemporaries, publishes the Report of the Sub-Committee on the Provincial System, appointed by the General Convention of 1877. It is one of the most important documents ever submitted to the Church in the United States, and is signed by the Bishops of Ohio and Pennsylvania, Sub-Committee. The report is an elaborate one, and shows that every pains has been taken to acquire a knowledge of the opinion of the Church. The Committee regards the establishment of Provinces as inevitable, and, in many respects, desirable; they recommend that legislation should be initiated, as six, nine, or twelve years will probably pass before legislation can be effected. They express no opinion on details, but submit the following recommendations to the General Convention which will meet next year:

Resolved, That the following recommendations be made to the next General Convention:

1. To establish four Provinces within the territory of the United States; a Province of the Atlantic, of the Centre, of the West, and of the Pacific; generally bounded by the lines of the Alleghenies, the Mississippi river, and the Rocky mountains.
2. That in all legislation respecting a Provincial system, the independence of existing Dioceses be guarded and preserved.
3. That the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America shall continue to be the Legislative body uniting the Churches, retaining the integrity of the Prayer Book and other Symbols, governing Provinces, and representing all the Dioceses; but restricted to general legislation.
4. That the General Convention shall meet once in nine years.

Respectfully submitted,
G. T. BELL,
WM. BACON STEVENS,
Sub-Committee.

The principle of the Provincial System will unquestionably be adopted, sooner or later, in the United States. It will, undoubtedly, be a great step in advance, as it will remove the defects of a system that, by the rapid growth of the Church and nation, has outgrown its usefulness, and will consolidate and strengthen the whole Church, and enable it to make renewed proofs of its vigorous life, and adaptation to the needs of a population which, as the report truly says "has become the most heterogeneous that the world has ever known."

LAY HELP.

The following extracts from speeches at the last Conference at Swansea, will show how the permanent Diaconate and Lay Help are advocated. In point of fact, Lay Help, both of men and women, as Scripture Readers, City Missionaries, Deaconesses, and Evangelists, is largely made use of in England. The leaders now advocate a general scheme of permanent Deacons and Lay Preachers. The Lord Bishop of Manchester said:—

"I am coming to something less general, and therefore more practical. Let us have a great deal more of lay work and lay counsel. There are plenty of reasons for this. You cannot attach people to a cause unless you make them work for it. And in these days of free thought and speech you cannot get people to work, if you will not call them in for consultation. Besides, we want all active work, and we want all wise counsel. The clergy have no monopoly either of vigour or of wisdom. Again, the clergy are charged with a large amount of party spirit and intolerance. I am sure that the laity have a great deal more of both. My lay brethren must forgive me, I must speak the truth. The layman, who is indifferent to all religion, is intolerant of all earnest religion. The layman who takes up religion is generally intolerant of all but his own. The so-called extreme men among the clergy are almost invariably goaded on by those

whom we call their followers, but who really are their drivers. One great reason of this is, that laymen have not been systematically enlisted either as workers or advisers. Work for God, for Christ, for Christian souls, must soften and dispose to peace. And if men have on them the responsibility which belongs to accredited counsellors, they will learn; and two-thirds of our intolerance is the result of ignorance. Nine-tenths even of our educated laymen do not know the alphabet of the Churchman's belief. I would have laymen of all classes in our parochial councils, in our diocesan meetings, in our diocesan conferences, and, in some manner or other, associated with our Provincial Conventions. And I would see them working ten times more than at present in our schools, in our parishes, and in our Mission-rooms. This will be a healing measure in every way, and we cannot use it too soon.

"Besides lay readers, workers, and counsellors, I advocate strongly the enlistment of a lower order of clergy—a permanent diaconate. The subject is to be discussed hereafter. I merely say, therefore, now, that, besides the other uses of such a body, they would have this use. We lose the zeal and energy of hundreds of men in the middle class, who, because they cannot find scope for their zeal and energy in the Church, set themselves to become Dissenting ministers. You cannot retain them, unless you can employ them.

"In close connection with this employment of laymen, and deacons, or sub-deacons, I believe that we ought to encourage, or at least fully to tolerate, what may be called irregular devotional services. Many of us love the regular services of the Church better than all besides; but there are some who have not been educated up to them, some (and the Church is bound to comprehend such) who crave for class meetings or other gatherings for social prayer, and who cannot feel free and happy without them."

Rev. Canon Garbett advocated a perpetual Diaconate. Mr. J. M. Clabon advocated Lay Readers and Evangelists, working under the clergy.

Mr. H. C. Raikes, M. P., spoke with great force:—

"He said the primitive Church found the necessity, soon after receiving the Pentecostal fire, to establish a lay agency. The functions of this agency, however, were gradually removed from their hands, not because they were found unequal to them, but because the Church thought it necessary to intrust duties of such high moment and such great importance to the more regular organization which took the place of what were called the irregular orders. It was by the agency of this great mass of auxiliaries that the Church was enabled to convert the masses of such great cities as Rome and Alexandria. The present masses of the population might at least be described as indifferent to Christianity; and they asked again for the same assistance, which alone by the blessing of God, could bring them into the Church.

"The sort of agency suggested by Mr. Clabon and Canon Garbett appeared to him to be a voluntary one. By the perpetual diaconate they might understand something a little different. He understood it to mean city missionaries and Bible-readers, who received some moderate emolument, and upon whose service they could therefore count. He submitted that they should regard the diaconate as the portal to and novitiate for the priesthood—that they should recognize another and distinct order, who should be paid, and who should put themselves under the control of the Bishop or Archdeacon of the diocese, and should become auxiliaries to the clergy. In conclusion, he pointed out that nowhere was such an order more necessary or easily attainable than in the Principality."

He was followed by Mr. Shelly who said:—

"The parochial organization suggested by Mr. Clabon is excellent as long as it lasts, but it is dependent on the zeal, on the energy, even on the health of individual incumbents. It lacks assured permanence, and, therefore, to supply this want I desire a diocesan rather than a merely parochial organization. But I think we need something more than a society like the London Association of Lay-Helpers. We want a real body of lay-readers, teachers, and evangelists, guided and assisted by definite rules, working under one controlling and directing head. There should be in every diocese a Canon-Missioner. A Canon-Missioner

has already been appointed in the new diocese of Truro, and I believe he has made his influence felt even in this short time from the Tamar to the Land's End. The one duty of such a Canon-Missioner should be not only to aid personally in Mission work, but to train and counsel, superintend and direct the whole body of readers, teachers, and evangelists throughout the diocese. In large and populous dioceses it would be necessary that he should be assisted by an incumbent in each archdeaconry, perhaps in every large town, but it seems to me essential that such a body should have one responsible head. I have spoken of teachers as members of such a body because I believe that our people need instruction at least as much as they need exhortation—instruction more elementary, more thorough, more systematic than they often get at present. I have mentioned teachers also because I hope that many of our national schoolmasters would find in association with such a body a help and strength which they greatly need to resist the many influences which now tend to secularise their work and to alienate them from the Church."

The debate was then taken up by Canon Williams, vicar of Llanelly, who desired a change in the law of their Church, in order to give lay deacons full scope. "He wanted godly laymen to be employed to assist the clergy in the services of the Church. He thought the clergy were very unfairly worked and very much overworked among them. They did a great deal of work which could be equally well done by lay deacons. There were some laymen who had the gift of preaching, and why should they not be allowed to preach? Those possessing the gift should be nominated by the incumbent, employed under his direction, and licensed by the Bishop, who could revoke the license when he thought proper."

Our readers will see from these extracts the ideas of some of the English clergy and laity. Our circumstances are somewhat different, and rules and details that would suit an English Diocese, might not always apply here. We need to arrange our own details. But there is no doubt we sorely need Diocesan organizations of Lay-Helpers, under a Canon-Missioner who should superintend and direct the body of Readers and Evangelists. We need above all permanent Deacons. And if the Provincial Synod would omit the seemingly interminable discussion on Canons and minor points of discipline, and give the Province of Canada a well considered scheme for the Perpetual Diaconate, Evangelists and Lay Readers, it would confer a lasting benefit on the Church.

PAROCHIAL PAPERS.

No. I.

THE NEED OF SYSTEMATIC WORK.

MUCH energy and willingness to work in many of our parishes is dissipated and lost, or else diverted into channels which, if they are not actively hostile to the Church are so in tendency, by the failure to supply opportunities of work. There are numbers of young men and women, and even of those who are more advanced in life, who have inherited an affection and respect of a passive kind for the Church of their fathers, which might be, and ought to be, changed into an active, energetic, eager spirit of work with and for their Church and parish, for which there too often appears to be no place found. This might be illustrated in many ways, but is so obvious that it only needs to be mentioned to command general assent.

There are two methods of arousing and maintaining outward interest in the well being and progress of the Church. The first of these, systematic giving to her support, is beginning to be placed on its proper footing, and to be set before our people in its true light. The system of weekly offerings from old and young, in sums from one cent upwards, whether by envelopes or in other suitable ways is,

no doubt, the best means of gathering in the contributions of the faithful. This is now seen and generally acknowledged. The other method, to be adopted side by side with the first, is systematic work. If the reason were sought why many Christian bodies, not so highly privileged as the Church, are yet taking the place among the people of the land which should be hers, it will be found in the fact that, by incessant appeals and perfection of organization, they continuously enlist the sympathies and waking energies of their people. Offices are provided for them. Positions in the body are found, suited to their abilities, in which they can use their talents instead of hiding them in a napkin, or burying them in the earth. This not only imbues them with a laudable spirit of emulation, which can be as truly sanctified to the service of God as any other Christian gift, and produces abundant fruit in the outward progress of a Parish; but it reacts on the spiritual life. The more intense the action of the Divine Spirit in the soul, the more eager that soul becomes that others should be sharers in the same; the more it longs to build up the spiritual edifice unto the praise and glory of God; the more it burns to bring to bear every means with all its force and power upon the careless, the lukewarm, the backsliding, and the openly wicked. A clergyman who can inspire his flock, or any part of it, with such a spirit as this, must himself be braced and invigorated, both spiritually and mentally, by the effort, while the people will not only rally round him, and support and cheer him by their hearty co-operation, but they will distinctly become the better Christians thereby. The work is done in and for Christ, and carries with it both the promise and the reward.

It can hardly be denied that organization has been a weak point in many of our parishes. Much reliance has been placed on the work of the pulpit, which, certainly, is most important. But exhortation to Christian energy is comparatively profitless unless it be pointed out at the same time in what ways that energy may be employed; while to give the opportunity for the work is to crown the whole.

It is the purpose of these papers to give a few hints as to the most suitable methods of parochial organization by which to unite all members of the Church in active employment for the glory of God and the extension of her influence. To this end, it is intended to discuss the PAROCHIAL GUILD, with its branches, the Devotional meeting, the Instruction meeting, the Bible class, the Communicants' class, the Confirmation class, the Ladies' work, the Church Literature, and the Parochial Entertainment Committees, and such other topics as the experience of the writer has suggested to him to be useful. The papers are meant as a humble contribution, not only to the needs of the clergy, especially the younger men who have charge of important cures, and would be thankful for such help; but also for the laity, who may thus be stirred up to "love and good works." The whole is reverently commended to the blessing of our Divine Lord.

"SUDDEN DEATH."

THE REV. H. B. WRAY, of Durham, Ont., has compiled and kindly sent us a list of the names of fifteen clergymen, who, since the year 1863, have been suddenly called to meet their God while engaged in the services of the Sanctuary.

Mr. Wray suggests that a reference to this startling fact might very appropriately and profitably be made in our last issue for the year.

Says our Reverend correspondent: "In view of these warnings and the prospect of our own early departure, may we not