

The Church Guardian.

Upholds the Doctrines and Rubrics of the Prayer Book.

"Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."—Eph. vi. 24.
"Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."—Jude: 3.

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THE DEAN OF DOWN ON INFIDELITY.

[Extract from an Address delivered before the Church Pastoral Aid Society.]

At the Liverpool anniversary of the Church Pastoral Aid Society, the Dean of Down—who was called upon to give an address—referred to the kind and courteous reception which had been accorded him, and the warm welcome he had received for many years in England. The subject upon which he was going to speak was that malignant ulcer which was corroding the heart of religion, and was leading people along paths which they should not tread, viz.—infidelity. He made bold to say that infidelity was a system of false statements, a system of denials. It was not with infidelity as such that their real difficulty was, but with the temper which has produced it, and the real danger the causes which had generated that temper. He then spoke of the class of men who for several years had been advocating the advancement and elevation of secular education at the cost of the religious. In the present system of education they were failing to train the intellectual faculties; they were only quickening them without directing them, and stirring them up to activity without placing the ends which were to be attained before them. In point of fact, they had substituted for education what was not education. True education meant drawing out the powers which God had given them for ends which He had designed. Instead of strengthening their faculties they were simply quickening them. They knew very well that the effect was this, that men were stirred up to the agitation of questions which they were not able to decide. Speaking of sceptics, was it not striking, he said, that a man should be possessed of so much ability as to raise a thousand questions, but should not be possessed of the little additional ability which would enable him to solve them. It was very clear to him that the best way to meet and answer these questions, these difficulties, was to state them with perfect plainness. Over and over again he had seen difficulties disappear simply upon an honest representation of them. They would never be able to answer a difficulty unless they saw it with clearness and stated it with fidelity. All the disquisitions as to the meaning of certain parts in the Bible were really to be looked upon as proofs of its surpassing importance. They were in no respect caused by any instability or insecurity in its meaning. He subsequently dealt with the opinions of people who were termed Agnostics, Pantheists, and others who endeavoured to supplant the teachings and truths of the Gospel with the fallacies and theories which were in the highest misleading, and for which there was very little foundation. Every science that they knew of was now hearing its testimony to the unshaken truth of the Eternal God. Several philosophers who had been tracing the origin of language had now beyond dispute established the fact that all language had one origin. Further examination by etymologists into the structure of language indicated that a sudden disruption was the cause of the present diversity, therefore confirming scriptural record. There was no scientific man in the world who would undertake to disprove one word he was about to say, viz., that the whole system of physical and spiritual things was one and the same system; that the laws of nature—that was the physical laws—held their tenour of immutability subject to the conditions which the Author of Nature had prescribed.

THE EARLY EASTER OF 1883.

Easter Sunday falls this year unusually early on March 25. The dates in the five preceding years have been:—

1878	April 21	1881	April 17
1879	April 13	1882	April 9
1880	March 28		

Only once in the last thirty years has it been earlier, Easter Sunday in 1856 having been the 23rd of March. March 22 is the earliest possible day. In the Ecclesiastical year, according to the rule in the Prayer-book, "Easter-day (upon which the other moveable feasts and holy days depend) is always the first Sunday after the full moon which happens upon or next after the 21st day of March, and if the full moon happens upon a Sunday, Easter Sunday is the Sunday after." The first full moon after the 21st this year is on the 23d, and the first Sunday after is the 25th.

This year, as in most years, the Prayer-book rule is correct and easily followed. But apparent failure of the rule is of periodical occurrence, full moon being used there in its popular sense as applied to the visible moon in the heavens, whereas in astronomical accuracy the calendar full moon is intended. There is sometimes a difference of one or two days between the visible and the calendar full moon, the date of the calendar moon depending primarily on the lunar cycle, but practically fixed according to the epact, or the age of the moon on the 1st of January each year. A full explanation of this is given in Professor de Morgan's "Book of Almanacks." In years when the difference is apparent, there always occur questions as to the correctness of the Prayer-book rule, or as to the accuracy of almanac makers. These criticisms would not have been made had a note been appended to the Prayer-book rule explaining that the calendar moon, and not the real moon, regulates the time of Easter.

The error of referring to the moon as seen in the heavens is obvious, for it is full moon at different times in different places. Between Truro and Canterbury, for instance, there is considerable range; and if the Primate had to proclaim Ecclesiastical seasons, as the High Priest in Judea did, from the moon, our feasts would be variable as well as moveable. Even within so short a distance as between London and Westminster Easter night falls one Sunday at St. Paul's and another at the Abbey, there being at least six seconds difference of longitude. If it were full moon three minutes before midnight on Saturday, the next day would be Easter Sunday; if three minutes after midnight, the Paschal full moon falling on Sunday, Easter Sunday, according to the rule, would be the next Sunday after. The date is, therefore, well left to the astronomers and the almanacks.

The range as well as the variableness of the time allows little reliance to be placed on the weather prognostications for Easter, of which there are many. For example, it is said "a rainy Easter betokens a good harvest," and "Easter wet gives much good grass and little good hay," the truth of which must be affected by the day falling any time between March 22 and April 21.

The effect of a late or early Easter on the Church fasts and festivals is familiar. Septuagesima Sunday, for instance, the earliest of the moveable feasts, fell this year on Jan. 21, leaving place for only two out of this six services for Sundays after the Epiphany.

The coincidence of Easter Sunday with Lady-day Quarter-day being also followed by a bank holiday, has to be attended to in a business point of view. Sunday being a *dies non* by law, all acts falling to be done on Lady-day must be attended to on the day previous, the 24th, unless where there is statutory direction to the contrary. If a bill of exchange falls due on Easter Sunday, presentation for payment should be made on the business day preceding. If a bill of exchange falls due on the Bank holiday it is not payable till the following day. When the last day of grace for a bill, or for any payment, falls on Easter Sunday, the following day being Bank holiday, the payment may be on the succeeding business day.—*English Paper.*

REFORMED CHURCH LITURGY.

A new responsive service was introduced early in December into all the Churches under the charge of the Consistory of the Collegiate Dutch Reform Church of New York. Of late, there has been a desire expressed among the members of the Reformed Church to return in part to the old form of worship which existed in the early days of the Church, both in Holland and in this country. At a meeting of the General Synod of the Church, which was held last June, it was recommended to the several Churches that they should introduce the reading of the Psalter into the service, as well as to follow more closely the Liturgy of the Church, and a form of the Psalter and Liturgy which had been revised by a committee appointed for the purpose was adopted by the Synod. Several Churches in New Jersey and New York had already followed the recommendation of the Synod, and the movement in favor of more liturgy in the Churches has become general in Reformed Church circles.

The order of service adopted by the Consistory of the Collegiate Church will be as follows: Prayer, salutation, reading of commandments, hymn, reading of Psalter by the minister and responses by congregation, offertory, anthem by choir, prayer, hymn, sermon, prayer, hymn and benediction. At the evening service the Apostles' Creed will be recited by the congregation in place of the reading of the Commandments. The Psalter is arranged in a slightly different manner from that of the Episcopal Church, the divisions being made with reference to the idea expressed, and with no regard to the verses. A prominent member of the Consistory of the Collegiate Church, said lately in regard to the change in form of service, that many of the Church members had for a long time wished to go back to the old mode of worship, the general opinion being that it would cause a greater love for the Church. The Presbyterian form of service tended rather to a love for the minister than the Church, as in the service the sermon was the most important feature. Consequently, when a minister of especial ability was over the Church it would prosper, but otherwise there was not so much interest manifested. He also said that in the old Church worship there was a great deal of music, and that all the congregation took part in it. Even thanks before and after meat were set to music, and it was a question but what the benediction was set to music. In adopting a new service the old traditions of the Church. He also said that the prayers in the Church liturgy would probably be more generally used.