

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. 34 Granville Street,
(top-stairs), directly over the Church of England Institute.

THE LAYING ON OF HANDS.

A VERY lively discussion is now progressing in the secular papers of Halifax, on the subject of Confirmation. The controversy has been brought about by exception being taken to the language of the Bishop of the Diocese, who, in addressing a class of Candidates for the Holy Rite in his Cathedral, declared the Ordinance to have been Divinely instituted, and as not belonging to any particular Branch of the Church, but binding upon all who take the Bible for their guide. Dr. Pollok, a Presbyterian Professor, and Dr. Burns, Pastor of a Presbyterian congregation, have both entered the lists against his Lordship, the first in a series of letters, the latter in a sermon; while the Rev. John Padfield and others have maintained the Church's position. Dr. Pollok began the controversy by asking the Bishop for his authority for the statement he had made, viz.: that Confirmation was a Divinely commanded Rite. Mr. Padfield, in reply, completely turned the tables on his opponent by quoting passages from the works of the Father of Presbyterianism, John Calvin, in which the Laying On of Hands was admitted to be *Apostolic in its origin*. Mr. Padfield also gave quotations from the "Assembly's Annotations," a work of the Westminster Divines, and therefore of the highest authority among Presbyterians, to the same effect; and extracts from the proceedings of the General Assembly of the United States, which strongly approved the observance of the Rite, lamenting that it had not been retained among Presbyterians. Dr. Pollok, as was to have been expected, signally failed, in reply, to make out a respectable case, indeed, as his opponent afterwards pointed out, he seriously compromised himself by statements which showed a lamentable ignorance of the whole subject.

Dr. Burns' case is a peculiar one. It cannot be that he has but recently discovered that the Church of England practises the Rite of Confirmation, holding it to be of Scriptural authority and of Apostolic origin. He has been a resident of Halifax for a number of years. Over and over again, year after year, has the Bishop, in the exercise of his duty, administered the Rite; and on each and all occasions he has used the very same language when speaking to the candidates, and yet no voice of Dr. Burns has been heard in condemnation. We must therefore place a high value upon the statement in his sermon that "certain members of families in some of our congregations in the City have been carried away by them," (*i. e.*, the Church's plain teaching on the subject,) and conclude that it is this loss of their young men and women which has stirred up the controversial spirit now being displayed. And certainly, although it is not of our seeking, we of the Church may feel most thankful for the opportunity of catching the ear of those outside the Church's fold, and so extending a knowledge of the Church's ways, which she has had carefully preserved to her from Apostolic times.

It must of course have been a disagreeable disclosure to Dr. Burns, when he discovered that many of the young people of his congregation, and of other Presbyterian congregations, were dissatisfied with the teaching of the Presbyterian Body, to which their fathers belong. But in this enquiring and enlightened age it cannot be expected that the intelligent rising generation will be content to accept Religion at their fathers' hands, without first bringing it to the practical test of God's Holy Word. When Dr. Burns calls for the Scriptural proof for Confirmation, he [as does also Prof. Pollok,] takes good care to limit that proof to an express command

of our Lord, asking for this Rite what he does not require to sustain Doctrines and Observances, from a Presbyterian as well as Church stand-point, the most important and sacred. If Dr. Burns will not accept as of Divine Institution anything which does not come in the way of an express command from our Lord Himself, why does he practise Infant Baptism? why does he observe the First Day of the week, instead of the Seventh, the Jewish Sabbath? why does he admit women to the Lord's Supper? why —? But we need not enumerate almost every Practice and Doctrine which Dr. Burns and his Denomination recognize as of Divine institution, and as being obligatory upon all men. Dr. Burns knows that to apply his test, these Ordinances and Practices that have been named, and many others, would have to be given up. But in their case he does not need such proof. He is satisfied to accept a Doctrine or Practice as of Divine institution and of Divine command, when he finds it practised by the Divinely appointed and Divinely inspired Apostles; by those who were in a wonderful manner endued with the Holy Ghost, and guided into all truth by the Spirit of God. Now, the Church of England holds the Laying On of Hands to be a Divine command, a Divine institution, in that it was declared by the Apostle Paul to be one of the First Principles, a Foundation Principle of the Doctrine of Christ, and was practised by him and by several of the other Apostles.

Having now introduced the subject, which our limited space keeps us from discussing at length this week, we shall enter fully into an examination of Dr. Burns' sermon in our next issue.

THE OFFICE OF THE CONSECRATION OF A BISHOP.

(Continued.)

The Collect in the Communion office is a special one, commemorating the gifts which Christ gave and the charge which He laid upon His Apostles, the first Bishops of the Church, in our sense of the word. Some of these gifts were miraculous, as the power of healing and working miracles. They have passed away, but the gifts of wisdom, knowledge, and strong faith are still necessary, and so are permanent. We commemorate and ask for these gifts for our Bishops, and we also commemorate the charge given to St. Peter, and continued to the chief pastors, "to feed the flock of Christ," praying that those who are called to so great a charge may have grace to perform it well, and that the people may obediently follow the Word of God.

"THE EPISTLE." "Another Bishop shall read the Epistle." This may be 1 Tim. iii. 1, &c., which describes the directions given by the Holy Spirit, through St. Paul, to Timothy, concerning the qualifications of a bishop or presbyter, and which are equally applicable to those who are called to the higher Apostolic office, which the word "bishop" here stands for. For we may remind our readers that in the New Testament the three Orders were: 1. Apostles; 2. Bishops or Presbyters [the latter translated elders]; 3. Deacons. But when the Apostles were dead, the second order having two names, the title "Apostle," out of reverence to those companions of our Lord, was dropped, and the word *bishop*, meaning most suitably "overseer," was applied to those who succeeded to the ordinary functions of the Apostolic office, while the second order retained the name of *Presbyter*, contracted into Priest.

The Epistle may also be taken from Acts xx, 17 containing St. Paul's pathetic address to the "Elders of the Church at Ephesus."

THE GOSPEL.—The Gospel is to be read by another Bishop. Three selections are given. The first is the commission and charge to St. Peter, and in him to all holding the Apostolic Office. The other two contain an account of the general "Mission" given by our Blessed Lord to His Apostles. The Service is now proceeded with by the recital of the Nicene Creed and the delivery of a sermon.

(To be Continued.)

PARISHES IN NOVA SCOTIA AND NEW BRUNSWICK IN 1819, '20, '23 AND '28.

COMPILED FROM THE S. P. G. REPORTS, A. D. 1820.

(Continued.)

We proceed in this paper to give a few notes from the Report of the Rev. John Burnyeat, who this year accepted the post of "Visiting Missionary in the Diocese of Nova Scotia." He resigned the parish of Sackville in May, 1820, Rev. Christopher

Milner, who died in 1877, succeeding him. This Report was made to Rev. Dr. Inglis, and read before the Board of the S. P. G. in February, 1821. He remained for a few weeks officiating at Amherst and Fort Cumberland. "You will rejoice with me," he says, "at the pleasing prospect of witnessing, ere long, the Mission Church at the Fort rebuilt." "The majority of the friends of the Church in the County of Westmoreland reside in the immediate vicinity." At Amherst there appeared to be a favourable opening for a permanent Mission. June 16th Mr. Burnyeat was at Shediac. He stayed at the house of Mr. Hanington, Sr., who treated him with the "greatest kindness." No clergyman had ever been stationed here, but "on each Sunday, in strict conformity to the directions of the Rubric, Mr. Hanington reads the prayers of our Church, and also a sermon from some approved author." £200 had been raised in this settlement, by the few Protestants, for a Church. The reserved lot of land was 1,000 acres, and the inhabitants had formed themselves into a Vestry to care for it.

At Buctouche a numerous congregation was drawn together. "Several of my younger hearers had scarcely ever heard a prayer in public before." Sunday was to them only a day of greater idleness and dissipation. In July the Missionary visited Richibucto. A few years before Rev. B. G. Gray landed and baptized a few children. There was no minister of any kind. Mr. M. Keat, a Presbyterian layman, "assembles the people on Sundays and conducts their devotions. He is aided by a Form of Prayer and some instructive sermons, furnished by Dr. Burns, of the city of St. John." There were about fifty families in Richibucto at this time, and Mr. Burnyeat warmly advocated the sending a Missionary, who should reside at Buctouche and serve the settlements on each side. From Richibucto he went to Truro, stopping one Sunday at Amherst. "To see a minister of their own persuasion, whose object in visiting them was to minister to their spiritual wants, was a satisfaction they had never before enjoyed in Truro." The Church people here were few and poor. An attempt was to be made to secure assistance for building a Church and securing a resident Missionary. Mr. Burnyeat is in some doubt, as the people are so few, whether the appeal deserves support. The claims of Truro upon the Society arise "out of its local situation." "It is but a day's journey from Halifax." He understands that several persons of independent fortune would prefer to live at Truro if a Church were built, and he thinks that if one were built "steeple would rear their heads in every English station from Westmoreland to the town of Halifax." He refers to the lands destined for a glebe in the township. He fears they are "irrecoverably lost." The "Ministerial lot" was in the hands of Mr. Waddle, Presbyterian minister. On August 22nd Mr. Burnyeat was at Chester. He was here introduced by the Church Warden, Mr. Walker, to his wife's father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. Thompson, whose "united ages amounted to 170 years." The Rev. Mr. Wright had been absent a year for his health, and several secessions had taken place. Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Walker read service, alternately, every Sunday. Over one hundred persons regularly attended. The Church was "a neat structure," but unpainted. The next week he visited Sherbrooke. Four years ago "the first tree was felled in the place from whence I am now writing." At that time Capt. Ross and Evans, with many of the disbanded privates "of his late Majesty's Nova Scotia and Newfoundland Regiments, received lands, with rations for two years and a quarter." Subsequently, some of the 60th Regiment settled there. Mr. Keats and Mr. Johnson, officers in the army, and Mr. Wells, of the navy, also came. There were 108 families, 73 belonging to the Church of England, and 35 to the Church of Rome. Capt. Ross, Mr. Wells, and Mr. Hart, by turns, read prayers and a sermon. "Yesterday," Mr. Burnyeat says, "I was agreeably surprised to see a small choir of singers, consisting of little children, start up to sing a Psalm, and afterwards to chant the versicles of the Communion Service." "Another unexpected incident" was a female presenting herself to offer up thanks for safe deliverance from child-birth. He adds: "Such an acknowledgement has not fallen under my personal observation more than twice since I have been connected with the Society."

The last place of his present visitation was Miramichi, N. B. He describes Chatham and Newcastle, and speaks of the settlers being nearly all Presbyterians. Still, within six miles on the south side of the River, there were 50 heads of families,

and on the other side about 20, two-thirds of whom were very poor. They had opened a subscription for a Church, contributions to be taken in "timber or money." Four hundred tons of timber, worth 16 shillings a ton, had been subscribed, and £48 in money.

We now come to a curious fact, which shows how early was the little local feeling between the present towns. The subscriptions lagged, because "the inhabitants of each of the principal parishes are desirous that it should be built within their several boundaries." Here the Missionary remained seven weeks. "If," he says, "I have met with more attention in one place than another, that place is Miramichi." And he instances particularly the "names of Peters, Simonds, Clarke, Peabody, Cutter, Sweet, Abrams, &c., &c." This ended the visitation for that year.

(To be continued.)

NOTES FOR CONFIRMATION CLASSES.

III.

(Continued.)

HAVING gone through the Confirmation Service, specially with the view of seeing what God wills to do for you in Confirmation, we may now as the second point (we must never make it the first) consider what, before you are confirmed, you are to promise and to do.

You are not going "to take upon yourselves your baptismal vows." You did that as soon as you could understand the meaning of the words in the Catechism, "Yes, verily, and by God's help so I will." But you are going in a solemn, public manner to profess and confess yourself bound by obligations already in full force. So it is very suitable that you should now carefully consider them, and perhaps change a somewhat implicit recognition of duties for a more explicit one.

1. To renounce (*a*) the devil and all his works, (*b*) the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and (*c*) all the sinful lusts of the flesh.

2. To believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith.

3. To keep and walk in, all the days of our lives, God's Holy Will and Commandments.

The last of these will require an explanation of the Ten Commandments; the second an explanation of the Apostles' Creed; and these two will occupy the time of most of our classes, each will require several.

We shall be able to consider the first one at this class. I do not intend, under this heading, speaking at all *particularly* of sins, although it might very well be done here. But I think it will be more convenient to leave the consideration of particular sins until we come to the Commandments. So that under this heading we shall think of some general principles which must guide us in our life. But first of all, a few words as to the classification here adopted.

The devil—the world—the flesh. We meet with this division of the tempting powers on two most important occasions.

The first temptation, (Gen. iii)—The tree was "good for food"; a temptation of the flesh, "pleasant to the eyes"; of the world, its show and appearance, "a tree to be desired to make one wise." Knowledge apart from God, is the wisdom of the world, springing from, and at the same time guiding spiritual pride, the very sin of the devil.

The temptation of the second Adam (St. Matt. iv.), "Command these stones to be made bread," a temptation of the flesh. "Cast thyself down from hence," presumption, spiritual pride of the devil. "All the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, will I give thee," temptation of the world.

Once they gained a great victory; twice, then, they have suffered at the hands of the Son of Man an utter defeat. In His strength all sons of men may defeat them.

Now, what shall you mean to renounce, speaking generally rather than particularly.

(*a*) That self-willed, presumptuous spirit, which is satisfied with itself and its own powers, which would lead you to be away from God, but how many try to be so; there are many lives so irreligious, so Godless. Is yours to be so too?

When we first hear of the devil, he is tempting others to sin. Now, here comes in a most serious thought.—You have much influence more often than you think with your companions and intimate friends. A sneer, a laugh, a discouraging word, may incline in the wrong direction the wavering balance, and turn to sin, or away from good a weak brother.—Or an invitation to do what is wrong, a call to another to join in sin may lead astray one who, but for that temptation, would not have fallen. And what more devilish work can you do than thus hinder the welfare of another's soul. How careful, then, should one who has renounced the devil and all his works be, not merely to refrain from hurting another's soul, but also to try and assist it to what is right. I don't advise you to make a great profession of your religion; to talk much, or to cant about it; but in a consistent way you can exercise much influence for good, and renounce those chief works of the devil, viz., encouraging evil and discouraging good.