

# The Church Guardian

— EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR: —

L. H. DAVIDSON, D.C.L., MONTREAL.

— ASSOCIATE EDITOR: —

REV. EDWIN S. W. PENTREATH, B.D., WINNIPEG, MAN.

Address Correspondence and Communications to the Editor, P.O. Box 504. Exchanges to P.O. Box 1968. For Business announcements See page 14.

## DECISIONS REGARDING NEWSPAPERS.

1. Any person who takes a paper regularly on the Post office, whether directed to his own name or another's, or whether he has subscribed or not, is responsible for payment.

2. If a person orders his paper discontinued he must pay all arrears, or the publisher may continue to send it until payment is made, and then collect the whole amount, whether the paper is taken from the office or not.

3. In suits for subscriptions, the suit may be instituted in the place where the paper is published at though the subscriber may reside hundreds of miles away.

4. The courts have decided that refusing to take newspapers or periodicals from the Post office, or removing and leaving them uncalled for, is *prima facie* evidence of intentional fraud.

## CALENDAR FOR AUGUST.

- Aug. 5th—10th Sunday after Trinity.  
 " 6th—Transfiguration of our Lord.  
 " 9th—11th Sunday after Trinity.  
 " 16th—12th Sunday after Trinity.  
 " 23rd—13th Sunday after Trinity.  
     [Notice of St. Bartholomew]  
 " 24th—St. Bartholomew. Ap. & M.  
     [Athanasian Creed]  
 " 30th—14th Sunday after Trinity.

## "WITNESSES UNTO ME."

(Continued.)

But these witnesses will die. They are convincing to the men of their day. But how can they reach the men of a thousand years hence? By writing it down? Will that answer? There is a profound difference between the teachings of a living man and a story in a book. It is no longer a question of a man's capacity and veracity, but of the genuineness and validity of a book.

The witnesses, therefore, must always be at hand. We find the very first act of the witnesses to be the filling of a vacancy in their order and number. Matthias is chosen in Judas' place. *The witnesses are a perpetual body.* It is not a question of verbal or textual criticism of a book. It is a question of living witnesses. But you say how can that be now, seeing that no man living has seen Christ risen from the dead?

I answer, there is no testimony like the testimony of men in *organized bodies and fixed institutions.* You may wipe away all the books and writings concerning the Continental Congress and the Declaration of Independence, and the President and Vice President of the United States, the Senate and Representatives of Congress and the Supreme Court, are living, present, testifying witnesses that the whole story as received is true. There is no other explanation of their existence.

So an institution; an *organic continued corporation* and body of men is always a present living testimony to the fact or facts on which it was founded. Therefore Christ Jesus organized His church. 'The pillar and ground of the truth.' Therefore He established His corporate witness—always alive—always on the witness stand—as at first.

Can you explain its existence otherwise than by admitting the truth of the facts on which it originated? How came such a witnessing body, if there were no Incarnation, Crucifixion, or Resurrection.

Mark you! the church started fifty years ago is no witness. It is eighteen hundred years too late. The church organized in Geneva three hundred years ago is fifteen hundred years out of court. The church existing in Salt Lake City is in the same predicament.

They are not witnesses. Their organization, their sacraments, their worship, their ministry were all 'started' they are sometimes proud to tell us 'only a little while ago, and see how we have grown. The Lord is surely with us!'

He may be. But they are certainly not witnesses of his resurrection. They have fashioned their arrangements, and are proud to tell us that, on the model, as they imagine rightly or wrongly, of a *book.* They are not *independent witnesses* nor does anything they do or say testify to anything but their own opinions.

Now here is the real meaning and value of Apostolic succession.

*It is the continuity of a witnessing body, a testifying organization from the time the facts occurred until to-day.*

'I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.' 'The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses the same commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also.'

'O, Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust.' 'Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me.' All you see is a grasp upon the past, a strong grasp upon the future, a conception of the Church of God as organic. One existing the same, believing, testifying to the same, in all times and places. In the face of such a Witness there is possibly nothing more contemptible than what is called 'modern criticism.' It is as if the past history and present existence of the United States depended upon the reading of a clause in the Constitution, or the authorship of a section in a particular statute.

The Church of God made and owns the New Testament. The New Testament neither made nor owns the Church of God. The Church is responsible for the New Testament, not the New Testament for the Church. The Church existed, administered all her Sacraments, bore all her testimony before a line of the New Testament was written.

Institutions, therefore, built up no matter how piously and respectably upon what they conceive to be the plan of the New Testament, are not and cannot be witnesses of facts which occurred *before* the New Testament was written, and ages before they were thought of themselves.

All Christian organizations, without Apostolic continuity and historical succession, are after thoughts, and cannot be called into court to testify to facts thousands of years old before they were born. They may be very useful and pious bodies and for a time do good, but they do not witness.

Our Lord established his Church, the Kingdom of God upon earth, not merely to teach, preach and administer Sacraments, but to be a *perpetual, living and present visible witness* of His Resurrection, and all that Resurrection involves and seals. There is the Body! You cannot explain its existence without the facts it stands on. It baptizes, it celebrates the Holy Communion; it ordains; it has always done those things. How did it become to be itself and to think of doing these things unless its own story is the true one?

It is not an arbitrary liking, then, for one form of ordination rather than for another which makes us stand upon the Historic Episcopate, and make much of Apostolic succession. It is the *witness* we stand for, the old transcendent holy office of *visible witness* before Gentiles, and Kings, and the Children of Israel.

We still day by day choose and select special men and consecrate them as of old to the special witnessing office of the Church. They have other duties, but this is special. They succeed to the apostles as witnesses.

How did Bishops come at all? It is sad to read the folly of wise men, who, compelled to admit that they have always been, try to explain out of their own heads how they came to be! It is pitiful to read the futile talk of other men who have risen to no conception of the Church of God as more than a religious club!

Is the Episcopate of *Divine* institution? I should say if it be not it is the most unaccountable institution I know. I do not think man could have invented it. He has invented in the era of clear history a number of forms of church government and order. It is curious that not one of them was the Episcopate.

One has the name, and is careful (although there is no special necessity) to tell the world that it makes no pretense to the thing—indeed, that there is nothing anywhere to answer to the name!

It seemed good to Christ the King, who governs all days and all ages, to establish an *organic* body. His own Body He calls to be the living witness to Himself and His resurrection to the end of time—'Lo! I am with you always.'

It seemed good to Him also, that governing and ordering that Body, its continuity and identity should rest upon one Office and Order, which should reach unbroken from the beginning to the end.

The Historic Episcopate has a profounder purpose than its critics dream. If it be not historic, that is always existing and always continuing, then there is no witness to-day that the Lord has risen. If there ever were such witnesses, they are dead and buried. There is only the story written in a book, and a book open to criticism like any other. The institutional witness has ceased, for manifestly any body, no matter how Scriptural it deems itself, which originated since the Apostles' days, is no organic witness to the facts of those days.

So we, of the Church, clinging to the past. In faith and order we will not break with the blood sealed testimony of the elder day. The Church of God is not a human invention, but a Divine creation. It begins in the upper chamber at Jerusalem, and can for us begin nowhere else. Any beginning later than that destroys its testimony to the supernatural.

It may have much earnest piety, much genuine orthodoxy, but as an organization it can bear no testimony save to the facts of its own beginning.

Had it seemed good to the Lord of the Ages to provide in some other way for the continuity and identity of His witnessing body, we would have been loyal to that body. But, as it seems to us, as we are quite convinced indeed, that he provided for it by the Order of Bishops, in the way which is called Apostolic Succession, therefore, we stand to that.

We throw all guards about it as the Church in all ages has done. We require the appointment and setting apart to be open, notorious, in the face of all men, with solemn rite and Sacrament. And this was always done. Bishops were never made in holes or corners. Three at least, except under most extraordinary need, must join in setting apart another.

Indeed the consecration or ordination of Bishops has been from the very first example in the upper room at Jerusalem, the most public function the Church has performed.

We have no doubt that the continuity is unbroken. There is no fact more certain upon moral evidence. Was there ever, for instance, an unconsecrated Archbishop of Canterbury? Was there ever an unconsecrated Archbishop of York? You might as well ask was there ever an unconsecrated Bishop of Louisiana or Massachusetts! It is one of the things not possible.