

The Church Guardian

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CALENDAR FOR DECEMBER.

- Dec. 1st—1st Sunday in Advent
" 8th—2nd Sunday in Advent.
" 15th—3rd Sunday in Advent. (Notice of
St. Thomas and Ember Days.
Ember Coll. daily.
" 18th—
" 19th—
" 20th—
" 20th—St. Thomas. A. & M.
" 22nd—4th Sunday in Advent. (Notice of
Christmas, St. Stephen, St. John,
and Holy Innocent Days).
" 25th—CHRISTMAS. Pr. Pss. M. 19, 45, 85
E. 89, 110, 132 Athan. Creed
Prop. Preface till Jan. 1st.
" 26th—St. Stephen. First Martyr.
" 27th—St. John. Ap. and Ev.
" 28th—Innocents' Day.

A MODERN BABEL.

BY R. V. W.

IV.

In our consideration of a divided Christendom, we have seen so far that the very Book Protestants most highly prize, the very Book they look to for the warranty of their peculiar tenets, the Book they claim to be the foundation of their religion (of many phases), the Book that they have applied the following maxim, "The Bible and the Bible only, the religion of Protestants," was really obtained from the very Church they protest against. We have also seen that the Bible teaches unity and condemns schism; that it shows that it was our Lord's intention that His followers should be one, outwardly united, that the world might believe that God had sent His Son; that we were to avoid those causing divisions; that our Lord did not set His approval on the schismatical worship of the Samaritans; and we have also seen that Protestantism not only breaks the unity required by the Bible, but also causes a contempt for Christianity to take hold of many persons.

If a man should ask Protestants "What is Truth?" he would probably receive as many

answers as there are sects. Now, is it reasonable to suppose that the hundred or more sects that have existed have all been right? Can their different interpretations of certain passages of Holy Writ be the ones we ought to accept as necessary to salvation? Is there any warrant for believing that God so willed it that the New Dispensation was to be composed of numerous antagonistic sects? Can we find anything from analogy of nature, or from the Bible, or from the study of ecclesiastical history of the first century to warrant this? If we study nature we discover that a certain complexity pervades every part of the universe, that all the phenomena of nature move with perfect harmony, because guided by the will of God. We see *diversity*, and yet *unity*. But when we come to consider man and his methods, we see that he acts, in many instances, contrary to God's laws, and in consequence thereof, he becomes involved in perplexity and division, also in misery and sin. If we judge from the analogy of nature and the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning a future "kingdom" that was to be established, we must come to the following conclusions: First, that in the religious world there ought to be diversity in unity; and secondly, that our Lord must have established some sort of a "kingdom" while He was on earth. It is in regard to this kingdom that the dissenters and Churchmen differ so widely.

The Church idea is this: Our Lord intended to found a Church; He did so; it was destined to become universal or Catholic; in this Church there was to be diversity, and yet unity; and it was to be composed of all sorts and conditions of men. This idea of the Church is gathered, first, from certain of our Lord's parables, and secondly, from the composition of the Church in Apostolic days. It is a fact too often forgotten that only *one* Church is spoken of in the New Testament. If we read the history of the Church at Jerusalem, at Antioch, at Ephesus, or at any other place, only *one* Church is mentioned. The historical fact that sects have existed, proves the fact that the Catholic Church must have existed all along since the day of Pentecost, or Whitsun Day, until now, for these sects to break away from it. The fundamental Scriptural truth, therefore, which it is necessary for all to embrace who accept the New Testament, is this—that our Lord came not merely to teach certain truths or doctrines, but to *found a society*. If a right conception of this society and its rights is once obtained, a whole host of misapprehensions about the Church Catholic, and especially the English and American portions of it, will at once be put to flight.

The word "Church" only occurs twice in the Gospels: once in Matthew 16: 18—"Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church";—and again in the eighteenth chapter and seventeenth verse of the same Gospel—"And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church; but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." But the word "kingdom" however, occurs a number of times, especially in our Lord's parables, which foreshadowed the Church's extent, power, and gifts. The parable of the draw-net, for example as recorded by St. Matthew (13: 47-50): "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind." The net spoke of was one of immense length, suffering nothing to escape from it. This was prophetic of the wide reach of the Church. The net was to be cast into the broad sea of the whole world, and gather in "of every kind," out of every kindred and tongue, men good and bad. This parable teaches the following truths: (1) Our Lord did not contemplate that His Church was to be free from the intermixture of evil; (2) nothing is said about fifty or a hundred other nets or sects trying to gather in men "of every kind." The parable of the tares

plainly show that the good and the bad were to grow side by side "until the harvest." Because there were bad men in the Church, or because the Church was corrupt in some portions, was no reason for separating from it and setting up rival organizations. The parable of the marriage of the king's son also teaches the same lesson. When those that had been bidden to come to the feast refused, the servants were sent out into the highways to gather together "all as many as they found, both bad and good."

The parables were spoken to the multitude, but to the Apostles Christ spoke of the government of His Church, its rites and ordinances, and its discipline, promising to be "with them always even unto the end of the world." Now, how could this last, this solemn promise of our Lord be fulfilled unless that Church, against which the gates of hell were not to prevail, was to be not only visible but lasting "unto the end of the world," except by means of Apostolic Succession? From Acts 1: 2-3, we learn that our Lord, during the Great Forty Days, between Easter and Ascension Day, spoke to the Apostles of many things "pertaining to the kingdom of God." What these instructions were we are not told directly, but we can learn indirectly what they were by observing what the Apostles *did* after the Ascension. The period of the great Forty Days has been called the constructive period, the period when our Lord traced the plan of the spiritual edifice, the Catholic Church. It is in this period that we find the germs of Church offices and institutions.

We read in the Acts that after our Lord's Ascension the Apostles returned unto Jerusalem and there continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, and that St. Peter spoke of the apostasy of Judas and said that another must be ordained to take his place. So they nominated two, Joseph, called Barsabas, and Matthias. After prayer, "they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven Apostles." Thus was the "bishoprick" of Judas taken. We next read of the members of the Christian Church continuing "steadfastly in the Apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." There was no schism then. No one had then arisen to say, "I am of Apollos, I of Cephas."

We next read of the appointment of the seven deacons. While the disciples were to choose the seven men, "full of the Holy Ghost," the Apostles were to appoint them. After they had been chosen, the Apostles prayed and laid their hands on them. Thus the authority to administer in the Lord's vineyard was given to the deacons, by the Apostles, as it is to-day by the Bishops (the successors of the Apostles) of the Church.

The Church of Apostolic days was evidently of *divine origin and institution*, maintaining its continuity by unity of doctrine, proper administration of the Sacraments, and a succession of duly ordained ministers. The picture of things in the New Testament is that of Churches held together by the action of a three fold ministry.

They were an Order of men, who transmitted their powers to others, and were by no means officers invented from moment to moment, as necessity demanded, or elected by, and to suit the pleasure of the people. This Order of men was to go on existing, transmitting and propagating itself without break, intermission or cessation. The history of the Church for the past fifteen hundred years clearly shows this to be the case.

It has been said that if a fair-minded Dissenter would carefully and thoroughly study St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, giving himself up to prayer and a devout use of the Litany, he would finally consent to enter the Church. The Epistle to the Ephesians proves the *Divine origin and apostolic continuity* of the Church. It is chiefly occupied with the