

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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REGULAR SUCCESSION OF BISHOPS.

For fifteen hundred years from the Ascension of the Saviour the fundamental principle of Apostolic succession in the Order of Bishops was recognized throughout the entire Christian world. The great continental Reformers had at first no dissatisfaction with Episcopacy. They sought only to be relieved from the tyranny of Rome and the abuses she had sanctioned. They applauded the Church of England for retaining the Primitive Organization, and defended their own departure from it only on the insufficient plea of necessity.

"If they would give us such an hierarchy," says Calvin, "in which the Bishops did so rise above others as that they would not refuse to be subject to Christ, and to depend on Him as their only Head—then, indeed, I should confess that there is no anathema of which those persons are not worthy, if any such there be, who would not reverence such an hierarchy and submit to it with the utmost obedience."

"If there be any," says Beza, "which you can hardly make me believe, who reject the whole Order of Bishops, God forbid that any man of a sound mind should assent to the madness of such persons." And speaking of the government of the Church of England by Bishops he said: "Let her enjoy that singular blessing of God, which I wish may ever be continued to her."

Luther declares that, "if the Popish Bishops would cease to persecute the Gospel, he would acknowledge them as fathers and willingly obey their authority," which, says he, "we find supported by the Word of God."

Melancthon lays the blame on "the cruelty of the Popish Bishops" that the Episcopal polity was destroyed, which, says he, "we so earnestly desire to preserve;" and in writing to Cardinal DuBellay, Bishop of Paris, he expresses his wish that "the power of Bishops should be preserved."

The articles of Smalcald, drawn up by Luther, declare that "the Church can never be better governed and preserved than when we all live under one Head, Jesus Christ, and all Bishops equal in office, though unequal in gifts," etc. The Apostles were equal, and afterwards the Bishops, in all Christendom, until the Pope raised his head above all.

The learned Biondel concludes his "Apology for the opinions of Jerome" with the following language: "By all that we have said to assert the rights of the Presbytery we do not intend to invalidate the ancient and Apostolical Constitution of Episcopal pre-eminence. But we believe that wheresoever it is established conformably to the ancient Canons it must be carefully preserved; and wheresoever, by some heat of contention or otherwise, it has been put down and violated, it ought to be reverently restored."

The celebrated Le Clerc, a divine of the Presbyterian establishment in Holland, expresses himself as follows: "I have always professed to believe that Episcopacy is of Apostolical institution—that man had no right to change it in any place, unless it was impossible otherwise to reform the abuses that had crept into Christianity; that it was justly preserved in England, where the Reformation was practicable, without altering it; and that, therefore, the Protestants in England and other places where there are Bishops would do very ill to separate from that discipline."

The learned Bogerman, President of the Synod of Dort, is known to have expressed himself to the

same effect when addressing the English Bishops who attended the meeting of that Assembly. Alluding to the happiness of the Church of England in retaining a Primitive Episcopacy, "*Nobis non licet esse tam beatis!*" was his emphatic declaration.

Quotations might be multiplied, but enough has been already adduced to demonstrate that the whole body of the early Reformers would have united in strongly condemning any departure from Episcopacy as it now exists in England and in this country.—*Selected.*

AGNOSTICISM.

In his discourse, at the opening of the new Chapel at Princeton, Dr. McCosh spoke as follows of Agnosticism as the prevalent modern type of Skepticism:

"When thoroughly and conscientiously carried out, it means that we cannot know anything. More frequently it means that we cannot discover any truth beyond what the senses reveal, that we can have no certainty of spiritual truth, or, indeed, moral truth, except as utility, or the power of imparting pleasure. Only those who have penetrated beneath the surface are aware how much this Creed, or want of Creed, or rather sentiment, is lowering the moral tone and religious faith of educated young men. It is bred in the damps of the earth; it rises up and is in the air; it covers the heavens from the view, and we breathe it as malaria. It is easy to show that it is suicidal. It is contradictory to maintain that we know; that we can know nothing. But when we have done this, we have not destroyed the error any more than we have killed a spectre by thrusting a sword into it. For the strength of its defence is, that supposed truth is contradictory, and therefore not to be believed.

"The only way is to stand firm, and to point to truth which we know as being self-evident, and which we are constrained to believe. What we have to do with those who favor the system is to set the truth before them and let it shine in its own light. We know that we exist, we know that others exist. Proceeding on in the same way, we find that God exists, that we are capable of knowing the distinction between right and wrong, and that we are responsible to God for the deeds done in the body, whether they have been good or whether they have been evil. We have as strong evidence of the higher and spiritual truths, as we have of the lower. I have evidence that I exist, but I have also proof that God exists, the Author of my being. These men would accept the lower truths, what can be seen and felt, in pleasure and in pain, in what they eat and what they drink, in meat and in money, and some are as anxious to secure as many earthly goods as possible. Their Agnosticism, practically, and in fact, consists simply in their affirming, and trying to persuade others, especially young men, that we can know nothing of the higher truths, moral and spiritual truths, of God, Immortality, and a Judgment Day.

"This is the deadly influence of the system. It is seeking to kill the germs of spiritual life which are deep down in our nature, so as to keep them from germinating. It is undermining the faith of the rising generation, and holding back all the aspirations of the soul, which lead to high ideals, and to deeds of heroism and self-sacrifice. It can be shown that we have good and valid proofs of these higher truths of morality and religion, even

as we have of the lower ones of sense and sight. If we neglect either kind of truth, evil consequences must follow. If we do not eat and drink, we must die. If we refuse to believe in ethical and spiritual truth, we offend God and must suffer the penalties of a broken law, and live without the grand belief and hopes that elevate and cheer the mind. God is declared in His works. 'The heavens declare the glory of God,' the whole earth is full of His Praise. It is the declared doctrine of Paul, and, I may add, of the highest philosophy which ever carries us up to this high region: 'The invisible things of God are clearly seen, being understood from the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead.'

ORIGIN OF THE WORLD.

Dr. Dawson, the distinguished Scientist, in his "Origin of the World," says most wisely and beautifully:—

The same old book which carries back our view to those ancient conditions of our planet which preceded not only the creation of man, but the earliest periods of which science has cognizance, likewise carries our minds forward into the farthest depths of futurity and shows that all present things must pass away. It reveals to us a new heaven and a new earth, which are to replace those now existing; when the Eternal Son of God, the manifestation of the Father equally in creation and redemption, shall come forth conquering and to conquer, and shall sweep away into utter extinction all the blood-stained tyrannies of the present earth, even as he has swept away the brute dynasties of the pre-Adamic world, and shall establish a reign of peace, of love and of holiness that shall never pass away; when the purified sons of Adam, rejoicing in immortal youth and happiness, shall be able to look back with enlarged understandings and grateful hearts on the whole history of creation and redemption, and shall join their angelic brethren in the final and more ecstatic repetition of that hymn of praise with which the heavenly hosts greeted the birth of our planet.

So do Science and Revelation join their teachings in utmost harmony concerning the Restoration of all things—a restoration which means a higher and sweeter good than would have been possible if the development of man and the earth had proceeded uninterrupted, and humanity had remained unfallen.

PROFESSOR FUNK, a member of the Roman Catholic Theological faculty of the University of Tubingen, and one of the editors of the *Theologische Quartalschrift*, has just published in that review an examination of the relation of the Bishop of Rome to the early Councils of the Church. We quote from the *Quartalschrift* the conclusions to which he arrives:—"Of the testimony which is usually adduced in favour of the Papal confirmation of the eight General Councils of antiquity, nothing has been found that will stand the test of a strict examination. On the contrary, we have seen that several Synods so expressed themselves with reference to their relation to Rome, as directly to exclude Papal approbation. I have, therefore, as I believe, every reason for a rejection of the theory in question." This is a remarkable *testimonium adversarii*. Strange that Dr. Funk can nevertheless abide in the Vatican Communion. However, he may be encouraged by the example of his diocesan, Bishop Hefele of Rottenburg, the recreant friend of Dollinger.