

The Church Guardian

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Special Notice.

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CALENDAR FOR JANUARY.

- JAN. 1st—Circumcision of Our Lord.
 “ 2d—Second Sunday after Christmas.—
 (Notice of Epiphany).
 “ 6th—Epiphany of Our Lord.—(Athanasian Creed).
 “ 9th—First Sunday after Epiphany.
 “ 16th—Second Sunday after Epiphany.
 “ 23rd—Third Sunday after Epiphany.—
 (Notice of Conversion of St. Paul).
 “ 25th—Conversion of St. Paul.
 “ 30th—Fourth Sunday after Epiphany.—
 (Notice of Purification).

IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER-BOOK INSTRUCTION IN SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

A Paper read at the Sunday-School Conference, Diocese of Huron, Oct. 1886, by William Craig, B.D., Rector of St. Paul's Church, Clinton.

As I write on this subject I shall treat it under four heads: 1. The Faith. 2. The Sacraments. 3. The Ministry. 4. The History, and I hope to be able to show some reasons why it is most important that there should be careful and continuous instruction on the Prayer-Book in Sunday-schools. 1. *The Faith*—I suppose there is no earnest person so broad or so lax, but requires on some point anyway that there should be precise and definite views. That is a requisite if you are to have any influence, or be entitled to the respect of sensible people. The Bible, however, demands something more than this. It speaks of a Body of truth—the Faith—a Form or mould of doctrine, a Form of sound words—a whole counsel of God, the Gospel,—which it says is *worthy of belief, ought to be believed, and from which no deviation will be tolerated for a single moment.* It is important there should be—if we would have our people “sound in the faith,” consenting unto the wholesome words of Jesus Christ, “standing for the defence and confirmation of the Gospel,” instruction on the Faith. And this the Prayer-Book intelligently considered gives. If it is asked *How?* here is the answer. It does not admit of dispute that the Faith is presented to us in both the Old Testament and most clearly and emphatically in the New Testament as a *History.* It would take too long to show this from Scripture. I would briefly direct your attention to the construction of what we call the Four Gospels, as giving us in the tersest way—a History of the life of Jesus, the Son of God. 2nd. To St. Peter's Sermon on the day of Pentecost. 3rd. To St. Paul's sermon at Antioch in Pisidia. 4th. To St. Paul's declara-

tion in 1 Cor. xv. of the Gospel he preached by which they were being saved—“how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures—that He was buried, and that He rose again according to the Scriptures.” Three historical facts, which you will see formed the burden of his sermon at Antioch. The Gospel of Scripture—the Faith is a record of facts about Jesus Christ, His Birth, His words and works, His Death, His Resurrection, His Ascension, His sending of the Holy Ghost. These facts are true or not. If true it is quite plain that a man must have very definite views about them. Has there been any provision made that the Faith, the Gospel, should be presented in this Historical aspect in that Book, which next to the Bible is our Rule of Faith and practice?

There has been the Prayer-Book in its round of Festival and Fast, with its special Scriptures, its Psalms and Hymns of Praise—its prayers preach this very Gospel of Scripture and so lifts up before them Jesus Christ the Son of God the Saviour, because it brings before us at Christmas the fact that the Son of God took our nature upon Him and was made flesh, and at Epiphany His manifestation in love and power; because it set Him crucified for us men and our Salvation on Good Friday; because it presents Him risen gloriously for our justification on Easter Day; because it tells us of His Ascension to the Right Hand of God as our Great High Priest to make intercession for us; because it tells us of the fulfilment of His most true promise that He would send down the Holy Ghost from Heaven; because it tells us in Advent of His Second Coming, the Hope of the Church. And I ask will not Christmas mean more to children than trees, and Santa Claus and cakes; will not Good Friday mean more than a holiday, and Easter more than eggs; will not some of our people come out of their hiding places and bravely greet the ignorant assertion of Romanism in these great days of commemoration if some importance were given to instruction on this very point of the true idea of the Faith, so clearly set forth in the Prayer-Book. I have not time to do more than mention in these days of unrest and doubt that the presentation of the Gospel as a history, so proclaiming Jesus Christ, must meet the difficulties of many who soured and distressed with the crudities and narrowness of mis-called creeds are turning away from Christianity altogether and lead them to see that the Bible asks for belief of the living facts revealing a living Person and not chiefly deductions from them, which may be true and which may be very far from the truth.

Speaking of the Faith, we notice again that we should teach (1) according to the proportion, the analogy of the faith; and (2) also that all real, solid teaching must be *gradual.* Our Saviour Himself told His disciples that He could not teach them many things; because they could not receive them just then. The Holy Spirit was to lead them, guide them along a way unto all truth. It is an admitted truth that no man can learn all things at once, and yet very often this truth is denied as regards our learning the religion of Jesus Christ. Eternal life is the knowledge of God and of His Son Jesus Christ. And you have here necessarily a knowing and yet a learning to know. The disciples had been taught *e.g.* about the death of Jesus; but they did not understand it—could not receive it; they had been taught about the Resurrection, but they questioned among themselves what it meant; they had been taught about the Ascension, but it was darkness to them. *And substance was given them, the details, the entering into the full meaning of them was left to the gradual teaching of the indwelling Spirit.* Now that is what we have in the Prayer-Book. First no one doctrine is presented to the exclusion of another. You do not find a continued harping on one string there. All truths have their due place and proportion, whether objective or subjective.

And secondly, the whole truth of God is presented for belief in the Prayer-Book, in one shape or other; but it is not dreamt that children or others can enter at once into the fullness of these truths. Now, notice the practical use of this, if they cannot enter into the fullness of these truths, you can only expect a corresponding life. What kind of a life is thought most of in our Sunday-schools? If we may judge from our Sunday-school literature, is a life “too high for sinful man beneath the sky.” Very much of the I-want-to-be-angel kind—bitterly opposite to a knowing and learning to know, which will make manly boys and womanly girls—pure, truthful and obedient to parents, because it brings them to Jesus Christ and tells them it is Godlike to learn to be like Him who, though astonishing the clergy of Jerusalem with his understanding and answers, was subject to His parents, and (notice the result,) “increased in favour both with God and man.” And I think there never was a time when we needed more a religion like this, which the Prayer-Book teaches, than the present time.

(To be continued.)

TWELVE HINTS TO CHURCH WORKERS.

(Tract by the Rev. G. R. Wynne, M.A. Rector of Killarney; Author of “Twelve Hints to Churchgoers,” “Twelve Hints to Church Choirs,” &c., &c.)

The following Hints are not written for the purpose of urging the faithful members of the Church to become workers, although they may perhaps serve that purpose also. Their direct aim is to urge those who have undertaken any Church work, such as teaching, visiting the sick and poor, managing working or benefit societies, singing in the choir, or holding office in the parish, to do these things with a high aim and single mind. We would like to stir the wills of the half-hearted, to comfort the hearts of the desponding worker, and to set before those who are beginning to do Christian work truths which may defend them from rash self-confidence on the one hand, and from unnecessary fears and dejection on the other.

This tract is not intended to be read once and then laid aside for ever, but to be used from time to time to “stir up pure minds by way of remembrance.” May God the Holy Spirit bless its words to the help of many, for Christ's sake.

HINTS.

I. WORK FROM WITHIN OUTWARDS.

All real service of God is God's gift. The only strength we have is what He supplies. He never gives a store or fund of strength, wisdom, patience sufficient to last for years; it must be daily applied for. His plan secures frequent interviews between His servants and Himself. Therefore He permits nothing but failure to those who do not “seek His Face evermore.” This hint is placed first because it is to the Christian worker the most important thing in the world. Wisdom and knowledge do not qualify a Christian for working for God, just as the most perfect construction and fitting of an engine are not enough. Experience and habit do not qualify a Christian for working for God, as the ten thousand revolutions of the machine yesterday will not enable it to make one revolution to-day. The new supply of the Heavenly Fire every day, and many times a day, is the essential of good and true work for God and His Church. Whatever is done without this Divine Power is ill-done, or concerns but unimportant trifles.

Do you desire to do true work, work which may tell, work which may last? Then let your principal aim always be to secure uninter-