

The Church Guardian,

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IN THE INTERESTS OF THE
CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

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THANKSGIVING.

At the close of another Harvest Season we are
summoned to assemble in the Houses of God, and
there, surrounded by visible tokens of his bounty
in the fruits and flowers which He has given us, to
thank Him for the fulfilment of the blessed promise,
that "while the earth remaineth, seed time and har-
vest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter,
and day and night shall not cease." Partial failures
of crops there may be, but from the day of the
promise to this, God's bow has never spanned a
scene of total desolation. It has been with us a
year of peace and plenty. A return of national
prosperity has gladdened our hearts, and we can
well exclaim, "And therefore our God we thank
Thee, and praise Thy glorious name." The Lord
reigneth over nations, over states, over families and
individuals. And especially at this season, when
the voices of the harvest are sounding in our ears,
as—

"Along the field, along the road,
Where autumn is scattering leaves abroad
Homeward cometh the ripe last load,

should our thoughts be turned to praise. The
spirit of song seems to ascend to Him Who causes
the corn to grow. Carried out in the true spirit,
Thanksgiving would be a blessed national festival,
if Christian men and women would only assemble
throughout the land, and begin the day with glad
thanksgiving and Eucharistic feast. But the day,
instead of being a holy day, has become simply a
secular holiday. Few give thanks; the multitude
turn the day into a mockery and a sham. *Thanks-
giving* enters but little into their thoughts. When
we think of our shortcomings and God's bounties to
us in this land, are we not almost forced to thank
Him? We trust that our readers do not forget the
great object of the day. Then after our duty to
God has been done, "Go thy way, eat the fat, and
drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for
whom nothing is prepared." We cannot forget
that even in this favoured land there are those who
need food and raiment; homeless and friendless
ones whom no one seems to care for; there are
hearts on which the glad light of Thanksgiving
Day throws no bright beam. O God, grant to
them from out of our abundance some of our
Thanksgiving joy! It is a time for gathering
friends around the hearthstone. Make the most of
it, for we have but few opportunities in this busy
world for pleasant reunions. The circle may soon
be broken. The eyes that look into ours to-day
may be closed to-morrow; the hands that clasp
ours now may, before another Thanksgiving, be
nerveless and cold. Make much of each other, and
thank God in His holy Temple for all your bless-
ing, and for the opportunity of keeping a glad
Thanksgiving Day.

REV. MR. LANG.

We should be sorry to judge Mr. Lang harshly
or to condemn him unfairly, and we therefore view-
ed his action in the best light possible. We are
glad to know from Mr. Lang that our explanation
was the correct one, and that the Archdeacon knew
nothing of the violation of Provincial Canon. It
seems to us that Mr. Lang, in his letter, makes much
too light of a very serious matter. Certainly, while
giving him every opportunity to explain his act, we
cannot see why he should have thought it necessary
to do more than apologize for having inadvertently

placed himself in a false position. As regards the
position Mr. Lang occupies as "a clergyman of the
Church of Scotland," however great he may con-
sider the distinction between the body with which
he is connected and the other Presbyterian bodies,
to us they represent pretty much the same thing,
viz.: Christians who have departed from Apostolic
order and Apostolic practice.

Mr. Lang has not been Episcopally ordained;
we only wish that he had been, for we should like
to lay claim to so excellent and eloquent a man.
But Mr. Lang has not been "Canonically and Epis-
copally ordained," and this Church recognizes no
man to have been properly called and sent, and
therefore no man as qualified to minister at her
altars, who has not been so ordained. We are not
called upon to defend the Canon. It has, we think,
been wisely ordered, and we cannot see what other
law could have been devised to govern the Churches.
We are not Presbyterian, "Established," "Free," or
"United"; we are Episcopal in our Church govern-
ment, for, as our Prayer Book declares, "It is evi-
dent unto all men diligently reading the Holy
Scriptures and ancient authors that from the Apos-
tles' time there have been three orders of ministers
in Christ's Church: Bishops, Priests, and Deacons."
* * * * * No man shall be accounted or
taken to be a lawful Bishop, Priest, or Deacon in
the Church of England, or suffered to execute any
of the said functions, except he be called, tried, ex-
amined, and admitted thereunto, according to the
form hereafter following, or hath had formerly
Episcopal consecration or ordination."

The opportunity has been afforded us to make
the law of "the Church of England in Canada"
clear, and we trust that Churchwardens and others
will make a note of it.

PROPOSED LADIES' COLLEGE IN ST. JOHN.

THE Presbyterians are taking active steps to-
wards the founding of a Ladies' College in St. John.
We wish success to every enterprise which will
promote higher education. But we regret that the
Church of England in New Brunswick, which
ought to take the lead in this work, has never had
a Diocesan School for Girls. Its importance can-
not be over-estimated, and such an institution is
the first work begun by the pioneer Missionary
Bishops in the United States. A Diocesan School,
under the shadow of the Cathedral, and with the
fostering care of the Bishop, would be a success.
Roman Catholic convents and schools, under the
auspices of the denominations, are largely patronized
by Churchmen, who, no doubt, would send their
children to a school such as might be organized.
As an investment it would pay, while the gain to
the Church would be incalculable. Can we not stir
up the Church authorities and leading Churchmen
to move in this matter?

THE attention of our readers, particularly those
of them who reside in Halifax, is directed to the
letter headed "A Disgrace," which will be found in
another column. We know something of the needs
of the section and of the genuineness of the people's
anxiety to have the building immediately begun.
They have given and are giving again towards the
building fund, and we can heartily endorse their
appeal. The "disgrace" should be removed at once.

PREACHING.

(Communicated.)

In what does a good sermon consist? Must it
be only a lecture or essay on Ethics, or some
dissertation on the Moral Law—some clever com-
bination of words and sentences bearing upon a
very general truth in the happiest association of the
more elegant forms of the English language, its
phrases scientifically arranged, its Rhetoric faultless
and an evenness of rhythm and flow most happy in
its effect? Is this alone what is required? Do we
merely look for beautiful figures of speech, apt il-
lustrations, a perfect arrangement of subject matter,
all the points introduced, considered and disposed
of in the most perfect order, and the whole enliven-
ed, like pretty pictures in a dry book, with striking
illustrations? The preacher who is able to use
these agencies—most desirable in their proper
employment—and float gracefully over the heads of
his hearers, far out of sight of some and just far
enough barely to be discovered as a dim outline by
others, and fairly grasped but by a very small mi-
nority—that man is a power. No doubt he attracts
and maintains the attention of his congregation, but

is he using the means he possesses to their highest
and utmost limit for good? There are sermons
which, as intellectual efforts, are most praiseworthy,
unquestionable in doctrine, faultless in scope and
application, in a general sense, and as scholarly
productions and religious treatises, above criticism;
but there is something more needed than all this.
We sometimes hear sermons on texts taken from
the Epistles of St. Paul, in which the line of argu-
ment adopted, apparently, by the Apostle, the
evident channel in which his thoughts were flowing,
the preceding and succeeding topics of the context
—in short, more of Paul than of Christ.

By all means let the intellects of the clergy be
trained to their highest pitch for their office as
teachers; let their minds be cultivated and furnished
for their work; let the language employed be
nervous and pointed;—but let us not have displays
instead of sermons.

A great deal of the language used from our pul-
pits is not generally understood by the majority of
those who come to church. Long words, high,
classical, and poetical expressions are, as a rule,
entirely out of place, unless in particular cases and
upon occasions when those present are more likely
to be influenced and moved by them.

Our younger clergy are often spoilt if they hap-
pen to preach upon any occasion which is noticed
by the public secular press, since there are none but
"eloquent sermons," "masterly efforts," "touching
appeals," "soul-stirring addresses" mentioned; in
fact, it is a foregone conclusion when a sermon is
spoken of in the papers that it is an eloquent one;
and perhaps the reporter was not present even
during the sermon, but got his information from
some one else.

The object is to win and retain the attention of
all present, from the very children up to those ad-
vancing in years, and having secured this, to speak
to them the great and solemn lessons and truths of
religion and the Gospel. A carefully studied and
practiced style will never succeed in this great task.
Let there be abundance of matter and the heart in
the work—style will then look out for itself. How
miserable is it for any one to seek to pass for an
eloquent man; yet how much more so in a Minister
of Christ! "Eloquence must be the aim of one
earnestly endeavouring to deliver his own soul; it
must be the out-pouring of ideas rushing for a vent;
it must be the poet's experience."

"* * * thoughts that rove about,
And loudly knock to have their passage out."

(To be Continued.)

HARVEST THANKSGIVING.

A SERMON,

By REV. A. R. ASHWELL, M.A., Canon of Chiches-
ter, England.

"He reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the Harvest."
Jeremiah v. 24.

THERE is a time for all things; a time to work,
and a time to rest; a time to pray, and a time to
give thanks; a time for sorrow, and a time for joy;—
but there is one thing for us to do at all times, and
which should be going on along with all else that we
either do or think of, and that is to remember God.

A good man never forgets God. And yet,
though it is the very essence of Christianity always
to remember God, still, even about this a good man
will ask,—When is God best pleased for us to
remember Him?—And the answer is, God is best
pleased to find us remembering Him in our times of
rejoicing.

So Harvest Home is the time of all others when
we ought to think of God. For all men are con-
cerned in the joy of Harvest Home. It touches all
alike, from the richest to the poorest, whether the
dwellers in towns or the labourers in our fields. It
is God's great annual gift of sustenance to the race
of man; and therefore there is, perhaps, only one
other day in all the year when we ought to think of
God still more, and that is Christmas Day, when
Christ came, Who is the Bread of Life; unless,
indeed, we are to speak of Easter, when He came
back from the grave, even as the corn springs up
again after the seed has lain its appointed time in
the ground.

And what ought we to think about most at Har-
vest Home? We have said that different thoughts
belong to different times. What ought we to be
thinking of most when we remember God the Giver
amid the joy of harvest?

I answer that there are several thoughts we ought
to dwell upon: and there is,

I. First: The Constancy of God's Gifts. God's
gifts are never failing. Harvest never ceases.
Man's ways of providing are doubtful, uncertain,
and precarious. God's providing is sure. Harvest
is the one thing which never fails you. There may
be good and bad crops in harvests, some being bet-
ter and some worse than others; but the worst har-
vest that you ever knew was a harvest still. It

was a very different thing from no harvest at all.
See how different it is with man's providing. Look
at trade, or manufactures, or investments. Can you
rely on them? All things of man's devising are
like man himself, they are changeable, they are un-
certain, they fail, ay, and what is worst of all, for
those who depend upon them, they often fail utterly.
A change of fashion will be the ruin of thousands
who depend on a certain manufacture. A political
quarrel among people thousands of miles away will
deprive millions of the means of subsistence. The
carelessness or dishonesty of a merchant or a banker
here at home will bring poverty and destitution
upon hundreds of families on the other side of the
globe, who never heard his name. But—harvest
never ceases. What was God's promise? "While
the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest shall not
fail." And it has been true. Even at the worst of
times it has been true. "He reserveth unto us the
appointed weeks of the harvest."

So at Harvest Home God wishes you to think of
the sureness of His Word. And then,

II. Secondly: The next thought is, how entirely
the Harvest is God's gift, not Man's making. You
know how people talk of a man's making a profit,
or making an income, or making a fortune. Well,
even these phrases are open to the objection of
seeming to forget "Who gave thee the power to get
wealth." But even though we may use these
phrases without thought, still no truth-speaking man
ever extended them to the harvest. No thoughtful
man ever speaks of "making the harvest." No.
You sow your seed, and you reap your harvest; but
God makes it for you. If any of us has ever spoken
of making his harvest, I hope he will learn this
Harvest Home to speak more like a Christian for
the future. You reap your harvest, but God has
made it for you, or there would be none to reap.

And thus it has always seemed to me that there
is something more shocking about an ungodly
farmer than almost any other sort of man; except
it be the seaman. They both of them depend so
entirely upon God. There is an old French prover-
b, a very old one, which says—"If a man needs
learn to pray let him go to sea." And we might
say—"If a man would learn how entirely his gains
are the gift of God, let him turn farmer." Your
harvest comes so entirely from God. You drain
and dress your land; you plough and sow your
seed, and—what then? Oh! you have to wait and
see what God will send. It is all over, as far as
you can do, when you have put your seed into the
ground. It is all waiting after that; while God
gives you the wet and the dry, each in its turn, and
the wind and the showers, and the sun; and too
much or too little of either, or any one of them out
of its place, would spoil your harvest, and you could
do nothing to help it. But God is as good as His
word. Harvest does not cease. And now,

III. Thirdly: Think what harvest teaches. I
said to you just now, that God made the harvest,
not you. And therefore I say, thirdly, that Har-
vest Home is the time to think of God's power and
God's goodness.

You put a little seed into the ground, sowing it
thinly, the thinner the better. Where do you put
it? You put it into God's earth, for the earth is
the Lord's. Into God's earth you put it. You do
not keep it in your barn. Little good would it do
you if you kept it to yourself. But you trust it to
God. And God takes it. "The seed rots and dies,
as our bodies do when they die. The seed rots and
dies, as it seems. It is gone altogether away from
you. If you go and dig it up again it would be of
no good to you. No, not even of the little good it
would have been before you sowed it. So you
leave it in God's earth. And God keeps it there
week after week, but not for ever. For when the
appointed weeks of harvest come, He gives it back
again to you. And when He gives it back again,
it is no more a seed but a harvest? Talk of mir-
acles! Why, I say here is a miracle God is work-
ing before your eyes every year as it goes round; a
perpetual miracle; one which God has promised
never to omit. The times may be bad, or the sea-
sons may be discouraging, but after all His word
standeth sure. "He reserveth unto us the ap-
pointed weeks of the harvest."

Thus God is showing His power and goodness in
every harvest field, and we should think of Him
gratefully and solemnly at every Harvest Home.
Gratefully and solemnly, I say, for a Harvest
Thanksgiving should be a very solemn and a very
real thing, and its effect should not go off when to-
morrow morning comes.

What do you go to Church on Sundays for? Is
it not to tune your souls for the week's work and
labour, so that when the Monday morning comes
your first waking thought may be, "I will go forth
in the name of the Lord God," and your morning
prayers may be a real dressing of your souls to do
God's will in the day you are beginning?

Just so after this day's Harvest thanksgiving, we
should have tuned our souls for the next year's
round; we should go forth in a thankful spirit; and
every day as we say our "Grace" at our daily meals,
we should say it the better and more earnestly for
the recollection of this our great annual Grace—
the "Grace after Harvest." For this is the great
year's saying of "Grace" for God's gracious provi-
sion for our bodily needs. The Harvest Thanks-
giving is the saying of "Grace" for the whole year.
God has been showing His Power and His Good-
ness in the Harvest He has given us, and we are
turning our mind and hearts towards Him solemnly
and gratefully. And now,

IV. Fourthly and lastly:—There are yet one or