

The Church Guardian.

UPHOLDS THE DOCTRINES AND RUBRICS OF THE PRAYER BOOK.

THE PRINCIPLES OF THE REFORMATION.

The principles of the Reformation! What are they? And what do we mean by the phrase? Is it a Home or Foreign Reformation that we are thinking of, when we use the term? Does it recall to our minds the names of Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, &c., or of our own genuine English Reformers?

This is a point that ought to be made quite clear at starting. For there is a vast difference between the two Reformations; and a lack of due discrimination in the matter has led many well-meaning but ill-informed persons to pursue very erroneous lines of thought and action.

These two Reformations proceeded from directly opposite extremities of the Social and Ecclesiastical scale. The Continental began from below, and worked its way upward; the English began from above, and worked its way downwards. Hence the former was *Radical*; the latter was *Conservative*. In Germany and Switzerland, therefore, as might have been expected, a vast amount of ignorance and brute force was enlisted in the cause, and, as in our Cromwellian Revolution, everything was summarily cast aside that checked its headlong course. The old lamps were hastily exchanged for new; and by their baleful light, Church Government, Creeds, Liturgies, nay, even the very Bible itself, were all re-organized to suit the fanatic tone and temper of these violent "Deformers," and many most valuable relics of antiquity were swept away altogether; inasmuch as an ignorant multitude always get beyond the control of its party leaders, and destroys both good and bad alike in its blind unreasoning fury. For instance, Luther and Calvin wrote strongly in favour of Episcopacy. But as they could not convert the Bishops, their followers have ever since denounced Episcopacy as un-Scriptural, and made a merit of giving it up as a Popish figment, together with the Priesthood which rests upon it; so that the human agencies of Reading Desk and Pulpit were exalted beyond measure, the Divine influences of Font and Altar counted nothing in comparison, and the new *Sermonic System* introduced in place of the ancient *Sacramental*.

In England, however, as might have been equally anticipated, the Reformation was conducted with a dignity and deliberateness that its foreign compeer unhappily lacked; and, except when thrown off its balance by importunate pressure from the Continent, where English sympathy and countenance were urgently desired, the ancient usages of Catholic Antiquity were reverentially conserved as a most precious heritage; nothing being removed but Roman innovations of a later growth, which could not stand the test when tried by the *Semper, Ubique, et ab Omnibus* Rule of Vincentius.—"What has been held *always, everywhere, and by all* as an Article of the Faith, that alone is to be held as such now." Hence Queen Elizabeth was allowed to have right and reason on her side, when, in answer to the German Emperor and other Princes, who requested her to sanction special places of worship for such of her subjects as might be more Romanly inclined than the rest, she flatly refused to allow them to form a distinct Communion, on the express ground that "there was no new faith propagated in England, no religion set up but that which was commanded by our Saviour, practised by the Primitive Church, and unanimously approved by the Fathers of the best antiquity."

BORN AGAIN.

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" were our Saviour's words when He was instructing Nicodemus, the Jewish ruler, in the mysteries of the new birth "of water and of the Spirit."

It is very easy to understand our Lord's meaning,

although quite impossible for us to explain the mystery which His words disclose. Our first birth was into this world as the child, and partaking of the nature, of our earthly parents. But being born into the world we came under the curse which our first parents, Adam and Eve, incurred when they disobeyed God, and ate of the forbidden fruit which the devil tempted them to eat, and for doing which they were driven out of the Garden of Eden. All Adam's posterity, that is, every human being born since the fall, became heirs to the penalty passed upon Adam expressed by the Apostle Paul in the words so full of meaning, "In Adam all die," and in another place, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin," that is, death both of body and soul. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." That which is born of parents partake of the nature of the parents, and inherits all that belongs to the parents—a corrupt nature, evil propensities, a sinful heart—all that the parent inherited passes to the child. And more, for as death passed upon Adam for his sin, so "death passed upon all men for that all have sinned." This is the first and natural Birth and the inheritance which is of the flesh. But God's Son was sent into the world in fulfilment of prophecy to pay the penalty for man's first disobedience, and also for all the sin of the whole world. He came in human form, as man, the second Adam, to atone for man, the first Adam's, sin. He died on Calvary that man, in Him, might be reconciled to God—that man might live. He died to remove the curse passed upon man, and by His death he has purchased forgiveness and salvation for all mankind.

Says the Apostle "As by one man's (the first Adam) offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one (the second Adam), Jesus Christ."

In Christ, then, is life; out of Christ (*i. e.*, in Adam) is death. Now, how shall we (that is, by what means can we) get *in* Christ?

Our Saviour has prepared a way. He has inaugurated a rite by which we are brought *in* Him. He says: "Except a man be born again he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." "Born again of water and of the Spirit." "Baptism wherein I was made a member of Christ." And so in baptism we have our original or birth sin washed away, and we pass from death unto life by being made the children of God by adoption and grace, and are consequently no longer heirs with Adam of death, but inheritors with Christ of the Kingdom of Heaven.

FEAR.

We read of "perfect love casting out fear." This means *slavish* fear. In other places we are taught that fear is an important element in the Christian life. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews warns Christians after this manner:—Let us therefore fear lest a promise being left us of entering into rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." There is a salutary fear which springs from faith; as when St. Paul says, "Work out your own salvation with fear;" as St. Peter says, "Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear."

This fear of God, this reverence for God, this fear for ourselves is a safeguard of hope. Hope by itself might lead to presumption, but being coupled with fear it tends to safety. Fear is also an incentive to diligence. We are easily made careless. There are temptations to this as to other evils in the Christian life. But when a Christian man thinks he has not yet overcome, and there are many difficulties in his way; knowing, too, that many who set out in the Christian race have slackened their speed before they reached the goal, and many have given up the race entirely, he is moved by fear lest he also give up and forsake the only road that leads to the kingdom. There is a

slavish fear which is no part of a Christian man's viaticum; but the reverential fear of God, the feeling we must work out our salvation, and that with fear—this is a Christian man's duty. We are saved in hope; the full salvation is only ours when we have put off this tabernacle. Until then we must use all diligence, lest a promise being left us of entering into rest, we come short of it.

WATCHING OUR WORDS.

Some moralists have gone so far as to say that *all* lies, reduced to their lowest terms, are lies of cowardice; and though this broad assertion can hardly be accepted, it is certain that the sum of man's falsehoods would very greatly be reduced were all cowardly misstatements, and equivocations, and excuses taken from it. Take, for instance, the simple matter of pretending to know what we do not know. Some person or fact is mentioned of which, at the first thought, one is a little ashamed to confess himself ignorant; and so, by word or nod, or deceitful silence, he tells a lie, and makes believe that he knows what he never knew—and what, very likely, there was no reason that he should know. And then the falsehood of evasion is pretty sure to come to light sooner or later, to the destruction, or at least injury, of one's reputation and sense of honesty. In no single matter, perhaps, do we all need to watch our words and deeds more closely than in this perilous temptation to pretend to know more than we do. There is, of course, such a thing as the courtesy of silence; but courtesy and dishonesty are two very different things.—*S. S. Times.*

THE MEN WHO SUCCEEDED.

The great difference among men of all callings is energy of character or the want of it. Given the same amount of learning and integrity, and the same opportunities and energies will make one man a conqueror. The want of it will see the other a failure. "Dead beats are men without force. They had as good a chance as any of their companions. Others went ahead and carried off the prizes, while they were lying by the wayside dependent. It takes nerve, vim, perseverance, patient continuance in well doing to win a prize. And the young man who goes into a profession without this pluck and force will not earn salt to his porridge. He will drag along through life with the help of friends, getting some credit with them for being a well meaning man with delicate health and unlucky. The real trouble is lack of energy. It wants push, stamina, vigor, courage, resolution, will, determination—in one word, energy, to qualify a man for usefulness.—*Church Herald.*

THE COUNTRY PARSON.

Some very eminent divines of the Church of England have been and are country parsons.—Hooker, with the exception of the time when he held the office of Master of the Temple, was a country parson; and it was in the country his "Ecclesiastical Polity" was written. Speaking of this work he says:—"I shall never be able to do this but where I may study and pray for God's blessing upon my endeavours, and keep myself in peace and privacy, and behold God's blessing spring out of my mother earth." In the earlier part of his clerical life, when his means were narrow, two of his former pupils found him on one occasion "with a book in his hand (it was the Odes of Horace), he being then, like humble and innocent Abel, tending his small allotment of sheep in a common field." The quiet of the country was to him a help rather than a hindrance to study. He is represented, indeed, while rector of Borne, near Canterbury, so far as attire was concerned, as "a man in poor clothes, his loins usually girt in a coarse gown or canonical coat." Perhaps country life made him more careless about his dress, while it afforded him greater pleasure for study.