

The Church Guardian,

A Weekly Newspaper published in the interests of the Church of England.

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Address: THE CHURCH GUARDIAN, Lock Drawer 29, Halifax, N. S.

The Editor may be found between the hours of 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., and 2 and 6 p.m., at his office, No. 54 Granville Street, (up-stairs), directly over the Church of England Institute.

PROGRESS.

While our remarks in explanation of our apparent small growth in these Provinces during the past decade must have shown that the Church is more alive than the figures seemed to imply, yet the fact remains, be the causes what they may, that the Church is being outnumbered by others; and it must have occurred to all our readers that it will require great and combined efforts on the part of clergy and laity if we are to show a different result at the end of another ten years.

We are not going to find fault with anybody, and have no intention of being personal, when we say that we must all work more and pull more together than we have heretofore done. Above all, we must display a greater and more burning zeal for men's souls in our preaching and in our daily contact with others. We must also come together oftener to take counsel of God and of each other, so as to gain a better knowledge of our individual and parish needs, and to make provision for them.

We would most strongly recommend such gatherings as will bring God's people together on a week night, when plain speaking, with united prayer to the Throne of Grace, may stimulate and enlighten those present as to their duty, and lead to a more willing offering of their bodies, souls and spirits to His service. The laity have not realized practically their position as members of the Church, have not understood that they are a royal priesthood; they have acted too much as if they thought it the business of the clergy alone to talk on religious matters and to work in defence and in spreading a knowledge of the Truth.

Without engaging in work the Christian can never grow in grace, growth in the spiritual as in the natural world being a development resulting from the exercises of the faculties peculiar to each. It is absolutely true that unless the Christian engages in some work for the Master, he must become sickly and puny, and weak in faith. Now admitting this, it is most important to recognize the fact that united work tells best. That while private prayer and private acts towards others bring a blessing, yet that united prayer and united action as a combined force can best prove effectual in doing God's work and in advancing Christ's Church.

We should like to see formed in every Parish, an organization which will bring together the laity (and by that term we include laymen, for the women

are always willing workers) call it a Guild, or by whatever name thought best, that every confirmed person may be given something to do. Not spasmodic, random efforts as some of our well meaning laity doubtless have engaged in, but steady, persistent efforts which shall pass under review at each meeting, and which will most surely tell on the spiritual life of both the Parish at large and each of its members in particular. The first and most important step to success, as a Church, is of course to train up a converted, godly laity, with hearts burning with love to the Dear One, Who, having died for the sinner on Calvary, rose from the dead, and is now ascended up on high there, at His Father's right hand, to intercede for His children on earth.

MR. SMITH'S VESTRY.

The following from the "Monthly Paper" of the Liverpool Open Church Association, hits off a too prominent characteristic of our modern congregationalism, and shews up its very objectionable features. It applies with quite as much force to our Canadian Church as to the Church at Home. Whatever may be the views and expressions of others, let it be the glory of Churchmen that they belong to no man's Church, or man made Church; but to 'the Church of the Living God,' established by the Lord Jesus Christ, and continued under the government of His Apostles and their successors to our own times, and to be continued to the end of time, according to her Founder's own words,— "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world," "the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it." The advice given by the "Monthly Paper" should be heeded by Churchmen everywhere, and every member of the Church should take a personal and lively interest in her welfare, not because they like their Rector, but because they look upon the Church, as she in truth is, as the Body of Christ. And, we may add, the sooner our churches are made free and open to all—as free to the poor as to the rich—the sooner may we hope to find such expressions giving place to a truer conception of what is right and proper:—

"We go to Mr. Smith's." Mr. Smith's what? You may well ask. Mr. Smith's office, or Mr. Smith's shop, or Mr. Smith's house? Not at all. This is the way in which some English Churchmen and Churchwomen speak of attending their parish church. Mr. Smith is the Rev. P. W. K. Smith, M. A., Vicar of St. Athanasius, Lowfield. They do not say, "We as Church people worship at our parish church," but "We go to Mr. Smith's."

To explain the matter a little further: There is Mr. Wilson at the Baptist Chapel, Mr. Jones at the Wesleyan, Mr. Robinson at the Independent, Mr. Johnson at the Un-denominational Hall, and Mr. Simpson at the Proprietary Chapel. The public ignores their differences and excuses its own indifferences by fixing upon the name of the man at the head of Divine Service in each place as the distinguishing mark. We go to Mr. Smith and you to Mr. Jones. Here, indeed, is modern individualism in a portentous development.

But our concern is not with the prevailing feeling itself so much as with a result which naturally has ensued. The parish church being called Mr. Smith's is treated as Mr. Smith's. If Mr. Smith pleases people the church is pleasing; if not, the church is displeasing. Mr. Smith is supposed to be personally interested in all the concerns of the church, monetary and other. The choir sing, the organist plays, the churchwardens act, the teachers teach, the parishioners go to vestry or stay away, all for Mr. Smith.

When shall we see an end of this folly, and when will parishioners learn that the church is theirs? The organist, the teachers, the wardens, sidesmen, and all the officials, are not Mr. Smith's helpers so much as people doing their own work for their own good and the good of their fellow-parishioners.

Mr. Smith, indeed, is their servant for Christ's sake if he

is worthy of his office, and they, the parish, are not appendages of Mr. Smith and his living. He and his living are for them, and no one can too loudly proclaim or too earnestly act upon this very fundamental Church truth.

Can there be anything more trying to an earnest parish priest than the funny, half-defiant, and half-diffident manner, in which a leading parishioner sometimes ventures to have an opinion and express it about something in the parish or church management?

The clergyman has been longing to know the mind of his laity, trying to get opinion unbiased and experienced. No, he hears nothing until one day he discovers they have been mining under his feet; they have talked, and muttered, and grumbled at least, as if they expected him to quarrel with them. They think something ought to be done in the choir or to the gas, or about the Sunday-school children, and are prepared to be dreadfully hurt if he won't listen.

If they had only recollected that the Church was their own, and not Mr. Smith's, and given him credit for wishing to benefit them, and not to please himself, they might long ago have found out that he and they were at one in opinion. The upshot of all this is, that our lay people ought to interest themselves in Church matters, ought to make their churches open places for all, ought to claim to be heard in all matters of importance, and hold up Mr. Smith's hands, not for Mr. Smith's benefit, but for their own.

Perhaps these thoughts may make some attend at the coming Easter Vestries, and take a warmer interest in their own Churches and Church progress.

THE New York *Guardian*, in reviewing a recent Baptist work and noting their great numbers in the United States, says:—"It would be an interesting subject for inquiry by Church people as to wherein consists the Baptist strength and element of success; and some useful lessons might be learned thereby. It will hardly be pretended, by any one competent to judge, that the Baptists are powerful because of their scholarship, their culture, or their superior abilities. No, it is not because of these; it is rather because they are bold, energetic, thoroughly sure they are right and everybody else wrong; and because, acting on this conviction, they push ahead with a zeal and vigor well calculated to ensure success. Surely the Church, with such authority as she has, such a lineage, such a history, such a free and open field, in no wise let or hindered by man, surely, we say, the Church in America ought not to be less energetic and bold than the Baptists, or less resolute in preaching the Gospel and bringing the people of this land into subjection to the Catholic faith as set forth in the Catholic Creeds. The claims of the Church are such as to make it—if they are true—an imperative duty not to spare any effort in order to bring all those who profess and call themselves Christians into the obedience of Christ, and to put a speedy end to all schismatical organizations and parties. Is there any doubt in a Churchman's mind as to this matter? Is he not sure, on the very best evidence, that the Church is right, and sectarianism of all sorts wrong? Can he not be as bold and as hard working in the cause of the Master as any Baptist? Indeed, ought he not to be more bold and more determined in the Church's behalf than the Baptists and other denominations are in the cause which they severally have taken in hand? The Church in these days creeps, when she ought to be up and sturdy on her feet. The Church is timid, slothful, as if she did not believe fully in her Divine mission and her obligation to her Lord's commands. Whose is the fault? When will it be otherwise?"

It is a striking fact that while the Church is not the largest Christian body in the Dominion, she is nevertheless the strongest in all the cities, having a larger population than any Protestant body, and being outnumbered by the Church of Rome only