

The Church Guardian

—: EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR:—

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CALENDAR FOR JUNE.

JUNE 4—1st Sunday after Trinity.

" 11—2nd Sunday after Trinity. ST. BARBARA.

" 3rd Sunday after Trinity. [*Notice of St. John Baptist.*]

" 24—ST. JOHN BAPTIST. [*Athanasian Cr.*]

" 25—4th Sunday after Trinity. [*Notice of St. Peter.*]

" 29—ST. PETER.

NOTES ON THE EPISTLES.

By THE REV. H. W. LITTLE, Rector HOLY TRINITY, SUSSEX, N.B.

(Author of "Arrows for the King's Archers," etc.)

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

"Be subject one to another."—1. St. Peter, v. 5.

I.—The whole passage brings before us the true inwardness of the Christian Religion. It does not stop at outward conformity to Church order, the recitations of orthodox formularies, exact performance of duty. Christianity is a Moral Power, modifying character, controlling motives, cultivating graces of disposition and habits of thought, in a way which no other system of religion has attempted or claimed to do. Submission—Humility—Confidence in God—Sobriety or self-restraint—Spiritual Alertness—Faithfulness in doctrine—these are essentials of the Christian character.

II.—The submission here recommended is: i. That of a member of the Household of Faith to Church order, and the doctrine of the Apostles; ii. that of a member of the commonwealth, to the authority set over him, in secular

things; iii. that of a member of a family, a son, or daughter, or servant to the authority of parent or employer. Humility—not the unreal profession of one who is merely influenced by the hollow pretences of society politeness, the assumed deference to others, which is merely the result of habit or policy—not the superficial confession of the callous Christian who glibly pronounces himself "a miserable sinner" and "lost sheep" without tremour or shame, but the sincere, inner consciousness of imperfection, of spiritual faculties unused, or misused, of want of relish for the deeper, and higher, and more perfect counsels of the Divine Life.

To be humble in the sense of the Apostle is to have that choice spirit of inward diffidence which he shewed after his own fall. (See St. John xxi., 15: "Lord; Thou knowest.") Boasting, rash vows rather under the influence of a great inward emotion, or outward sorrow, rashly promising with the lips, and hastiness in uttering any word before God, (Eccl. v. 2), are entirely contrary to this spirit of Christian humility. Confidence in God demands that all "all" our care should be laid upon Him. "All"—not the weightier cares of life, not the merely spiritual troubles of the time, but every care, responsibility, duty of our daily life. There must be no reserves, no area of the life into which God is not admitted. Every door of the soul must be thrown wide open, every avenue of approach free to Him, who cares for us, and longs to share our cares. God asks for our confidence in small things as well as in great—the petty details of our obscure, and (to the world) unimportant lives. We tell the veriest trifles to those we love, it is a mark of confidence. We presume upon their love, because we know they "care" for us. Sobriety, watchfulness, habits of mind suited to the state of expectation in which we live, the pilgrimage through the enemy's country in which we are engaged, the period of probation, for a greater and higher life, through which we are now passing. "Sobriety is a grace belonging to the mind as well the body": it calls for a temperate use of bodily pleasure, but it hints most forcibly at the duty of keeping *the mind ever on an even balance*, so as never to be unduly elicited by joy, or depressed by sorrow: or seriously affected by "the changes and chances of this mortal life." To be watchful is to be self-distrustful, and to be constantly on the look-out, (circumspect—looking all around) for danger. The roaring lion—not awaiting the fall of the soul, but actively seeking to "devour" it, "going about," busy in his work of destroying the children of the kingdom, a striking figure, presenting in a manner not to be misunderstood, the aggressive power of evil. The same in our day as when Epistle was written. Satan a Person, not an influence or a principle.

III.—"Faith" the shield with which to resist evil. Faith in the impartiality of God, a great strength to the tempted. We must not say, "my lot is harder than that of others,"—"I am more tried,"—ours, dear brother or sister, is no peculiar case, no "strange thing," even if it is a "fiery trial" that tries us. "Though he slay me yet will I trust in Him," is the confession of the sublimest Christian philosophy—it can never be improved upon.

IV.—Suffering and trial must do their work in us. "Many a blow and biting sculpture," must "polish well the stones elect." With joy

we must accept the law of the Divine economy that we can be made perfect only through "suffering." Heb. v., 8. But this state of trial is only "for a while." We know nothing of the despair of the heathen, who foresaw no relief to his misery. "Fate" is the cry of heathenism—"Hope" the watchword of the Christian. Humanity was not created to feed the grave, but to live with God for ever and ever. So the Apostle prays that perfection, purity of thought and motive; singleness of mind, without fickleness, as in St. Peter's own case (see St. Mark, xi., v. 72): strength, power to resist and stand and enjoy: fixedness of mind as to Christian truth—no more doubts and fears, but the feeling of the sailor who treads solid ground after being rescued from peril of death by water; may be given to those who had long before made an outward profession of Christian obedience, in the Sacrament of Baptism, and the ordinance of the Laying on of Hands. Christianity is a Life as well as a Creed.

(To be continued.)

HYMNS AND HYMN WRITERS.

BY

REV. CANON BRIGSTOCKE, D.D., Rector of TRINITY CHURCH, ST. JOHN, N.B.

(Continued.)

V.

We come now to more modern times, and to speak of hymns and hymn writers in the nineteenth century.

The eighteenth century was a dark period in the history of the Church of England. The few earnest spirits were estranged from her, and indifference and apathy prevailed; consequently, the hymnody of the eighteenth century was due mainly to Nonconformists. In the nineteenth, a great change has taken place. With few exceptions, the noblest and most numerous of the hymns of the last sixty years have come from the heart of the Church of England—bright, and clear testimony this, to the power and zeal of her religious life. Materials are now overwhelming, and hymn-writers are abundant. We have Kelly, Montgomery, Mant, Heber, Milman, Grant, Keble, Lyte, Charlott, Elliott, Frederick Faber, Mrs. Alexander, John Henry Newman, and Francis Ridley Havergal. In treating of these, we can here do no more, than notice some of the most famous hymns, for which we are indebted to these gifted poets.

To Kelly, we are indebted for:—

"We sing the praise of Him who died," and the beautiful evening hymn:—

"Through the day, Thy love has spared us,
Now we lay us down to rest."

James Montgomery is one of the most popular of hymn-writers. From his pen we quote:

"Hail! to the Lord's anointed,
Great David's greater son,"

and:

"For ever with the Lord
Amen; so let it be,"

of his more solemn hymns we have:—

"Go to dark Gethsamene,
Ye that feel the Tempter's power,"

and the Ordination hymn:—

"Pour out Thy Spirit from on high,
Lord, thine assembled servants bless,"

and the beautiful ode to prayer:—

"Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Uttered, or unexpressed."

This hymn was written for a book on prayer by the late Rev. Edward Bickersteth in 1818.

Bishop Heber inaugurated a new era in our Church hymnody. He not only wrote many hymns himself, but adapted them to the services