

The Church Guardian

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CALENDAR FOR JUNE.

JUNE 1st—TRINITY SUNDAY.

" 8th—First Sunday after Trinity. Notice of St. Barnabas.

" 11th—St. BARNABAS. Ap. & M.

" 15th—2nd Sunday after Trinity.

" 22nd—3rd Sunday after Trinity. Notice of St. John Baptist.

" 24th—Nativity of St. John Baptist (Athan. Creed), and of St. Peter.

" 29th—4th Sunday after Trinity. St. Peter. Ap & M.

DIVORCE.

(From the Southern Cross, Port Elizabeth, South Africa.)

In a recent leading article the *Cape Argus* commends the recent Victorian Divorce Act, and suggests it as a model for this Colony to follow. The *Cape Argus* has a wide influence, especially outside the Colony, and we feel it our duty to raise a prompt and emphatic protest against the line the *Cape Argus* has adopted. We are perfectly aware that the *Cape Argus* will not be influenced by our setting forth the simple and straightforward doctrine of the Church, which is, that marriage is an *indissoluble union*. We simply state the fact that the Church of England, and its daughter Churches, cannot recognize and admit what canonists term divorce a *vinculo matrimonii*. The Church has always allowed *judicial separation*, but never has sanctioned divorce with permission to the parties to remarry. Canon 107 of the Church of England is very explicit upon this point. It states that, in all sentences of *judicial separation*, "there shall be a caution and restraint inserted in the Act of the said sentence, that the parties so separated shall live chastely and continently, neither shall they, during each others' life, contract matrimony with other person." This is the law which the Clergy of the Church of England have to administer. The most influential Provincial Synod in the Anglican Communion is, without doubt, the ancient and venerable Convocation of Canterbury. In 1883 the Convocation of Canterbury passed the following resolution:—

"That this House deeply regrets the existence of the Divorce Acts, and the liberty they grant for the remarriage of divorced persons, as tending to lower both the public estimate of the indissolubleness of the Marriage bond, and the tone of public morals, and as also liable to cause difficulty and embarrassment to the Clergy in reference to publishing the Banns of divorced persons, and to admitting those who have contracted such a marriage to the Holy Communion; and desires to call the attention of Churchmen to the law of Holy Scripture in this respect, as expressed by the Church in Canon 107."

The Convocation of Canterbury considers that Canon 107 is a *true expression* of the law of Holy Scripture, and not a mere expression of past ecclesiastical usage. But although these considerations are cogent enough to bind the consciences of Church people, we shall be reminded that they will not influence such public opinion as is likely to follow the lead of the *Cape Argus*.

We therefore approach the question from a totally different point of view. Marriage is the foundation of a stable and orderly social fabric. Cheap and easy divorces, for such frivolous reasons as American law permits, break up the fabric of society by invading the sanctity of the marriage bond, which is its basis. To imperil the sanctity of social and family life is to endanger the State. Mr. Phelps, who was formerly American Ambassador in London, has written forcibly enough on the subject from an American Statesman's point of view. We believe that Mr. Phelps writes words of sober and simple truth. We take the following extract from a Chicago newspaper:—

"In the December issue of *The Forum* there was a paper on 'Divorce in the United States' which deserves a wide reading and consideration. After enumerating the leading facts, the writer (late minister to England) declares that the whole business is a disgrace to our country and an alarming menace to our social order. He looks at the matter as a statesman, and solely as affecting the body politic, and it is interesting to note how the ripest political wisdom here accords with the precepts of the purest religion in the conclusion reached as to the only effectual remedy for this monstrous abuse. 'I venture to suggest,' says Mr. Phelps, 'as the result of a long observation of judicial proceedings in this class of cases, that the remedy will be found in the entire abolition of the sort of divorce that allows the parties, or either of them to marry again. Of course, provision must be made for legal separation or divorce *a mensa et thoro*, but if the right to marry again is refused, such cases of separation would be very few. The desire to re-marry is the motive, in the great majority of cases, for seeking divorce. As to the plea that such a radical measure for the cure of this scandalous evil would impose hardship upon innocent parties, it is easily disposed of by the consideration that this may be said of many other wise and necessary laws. The only question at issue is whether the promotion of the general good would counterbalance the possible disadvantages which individuals here and there might experience. This is a question which philanthropists can answer only in one way.'"

It is strange that the American statesman should have arrived, by a process of his own reasoning, at the same conclusion which the Church has always held. He virtually says, "Let us allow *judicial separation*, but not divorce, which permits re marriage of the parties." Here is the key to the whole question. If such miserable and immoral enactments as the Victorian Divorce Act ever become general in the Empire, it will perish of social dry rot. The foundations of true morality and order will be shaken and imperilled, and if moral laxity with regard to the marriage bond is once permitted by the State, it is a case of *Vestigia nulla retrorsum*. It is the duty of every good citizen

of the Empire, whatever his creed may be, to resist by all lawful means the introduction of such legislation as the Victorian Divorce Act, and to do his best to influence public opinion against it.

THE BISHOP DOANE MANUALS

OF

SOUND, HISTORICAL, CATECHETICAL CHURCH TEACHING.

The following letter from one well known in the Mother Church appears in *Church Bells* of 16th May in regard to these Manuals which are having we are pleased to know extended use in the Canadian Church.—Ed.

SIR,—I have sought on many occasions and with some persistence, at various Church Congresses and elsewhere to urge the importance of the Church possessing and using a system of graduated lessons for Sunday schools, so ordered that in every department of a Sunday school, whether of infants or others, the same subject should be taught at the same time, and that this might be so throughout the whole Anglican Communion. For some years I feared there was small hope of anything being accomplished; but of later years the number of admirable works—the result of much thought, learning, and research—calculated to assist men in the extremely difficult and exhausting act of really good catechising is such that I dread to mention another, lest by so writing a prejudice may be excited against what has been done by others, though I herein involve my own efforts as well as those of other far more competent men.

I desire to draw the attention of the Church of the Anglican Communion to a work which must already be known to many of them, inasmuch as I believe that over a quarter of a million copies of it have been sold. It forms part of a series of instruction books for schools and families, edited by the Bishop of Albany, and is called, *Manual of Christian Doctrine*, 'according to the Church Catechism, adapted to the Christian year, and in four uniform grades; with an introduction by the Very Rev. the Dean of St. Paul's, London. The work has been six years before the public, but suggests and supplies (*perhaps better than most works?*) what is needed in the present day; for, as the Dean remarks in his introduction, 'none of us probably adequately comprehend the degree of ignorance, or of half knowledge, vague, baseless, meaningless, in which multitudes of what we call our educated classes grow up. They have never had a month's real and serious teaching about the rudiments and first principles of Christian revealed truth.' Other remarks equally pungent and equally truthful and needful follow, while in the preface to the American edition by the author, I for one am glad to see a protest against the 'Sunday school' being made a 'Children's Church,' and against every form of Sunday-school service which exceeds a very brief prayerful commencement and closing of the school work.

And I may here also express regret that many hymns in our too many hymnals are arranged under the heading of 'Children's Hymns,' when many persons besides children are present and not unfitly sing them. Moreover, the effect upon persons of thirteen years of age and upwards is to keep them from participation in what is as suitable for them as for their juniors, and however much we must regret such '*fastidiousness*,' it may be better to avoid any needless irritation in such a matter. In the course of the year this manual almost secures the thorough and accurate learning of the Catechism, and also such a systematic teaching of doctrines and Church history as cannot fail to produce a very excellent effect on the coming generation; indeed, there is no reasonable doubt that if the children of the