

The Church Guardian

— : EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR : —

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CALENDAR FOR NOVEMBER.

Nov. 1—ALL SAINTS.

" 5—23rd Sunday after Trinity.

" 12—24th Sunday after Trinity.

" 19—25th Sunday after Trinity.

" 26—26th Sunday after Trinity. [Sunday
next before ADVENT.] (*Give Notice of St. Andrew's Day.*)

" 30—ST. ANDREW'S DAY.

ADVENT 1893.

"Now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."
Romans xiii. 11.

With this begins the Church year, which with its four Sundays, makes a proper and needed preparation for the Christmas fact and joy. The name is of Latin derivation, and is employed to designate the *Two Comings of Christ* "in great humility," eighteen centuries ago, *To Save*; and His coming hereafter *To Judge*. Advent sounds thus a bugle note of vigilance and preparation, urging us all in the language of the Collect, "To cast away the works of darkness and put upon us the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life." And so it stretches on through the Christmas festival, the Epiphany evidences of our Lord's Divinity, the Lenten sorrow for sin, the shadow of the Cross, the gloom of the grave, the Easter triumph, the Glory of Olivet, the Pentecostal effusion of Holy Ghost, the establishment of the Church as an historic and perpetual organization on earth, the festival of Trinity and the necessary Trinitarian conception of true Christianity, itself followed by the long season bearing this name and devoted to practical teachings in the duties of every-day religion. In this annual round, how true it is, that—

As prisoners notch their tally-stick,
And wait the far-off day,
So marks she days, and months, and years,
To ponder and to pray:

"And year by year beginning new
Her faithful task sublime.
How lovingly she matcheth out,
Each portion in its time."

—Parish Guide.

Dwell upon the thought of Advent as a great reality. It is an article of the Creed. It is a truth that was once most intimately connected with that corner-stone of primitive preaching—the Resurrection. Now it has almost disappeared from Christian thought, and certainly is never heard in many pulpits. Yet if one will take the trouble to examine the epistles of the New Testament it will be surprising to see the prominence of that teaching of the Lord's return. It will be an instructive study to note how very markedly our Lord dwelt upon the same in His parables and discourses. Out of thirty parables at least ten are more or less concerned with the idea of Advent, and these are among the most noted ones. Of the set discourses in which the teaching is most

direct and positive, there are not a few. Yet this doctrine has been pushed to one side, explained away, even denied in public teachings, without seemingly a suspicion that it belongs to the very essence of New Testament Scripture. Of course, scientific rationalism denies it. Having disposed of the beginning of the world, to be consistent it must drop all belief in the ending of the same.—*Selected.*

From time to time obscure and evanescent sects, founded by illiterate men, much bewildered from pouring over the prophecies, revive the thought of Advent, only to fall into the special error the Lord warned against—viz., the fixing of the day and hour. This, no doubt, has led to the distaste with which some, who should know better, view the idea of Advent. But errors of all sorts should not be suffered to obscure any vital truth of Revelation. We bid our readers strive for themselves to see what God's Word declares, and to clear that away from all speculations of men. For the Lord's own solemn and affectionate Word bids his chosen to "Watch!"; "Lest coming suddenly He find them sleeping."

THE coming in of each Advent season witnesses to some great and decided advance towards the second coming, in His glory, of the man Christ Jesus. The religious observer cannot fail to recognize this progress year by year, though to the purely secular mind it may not be evident. That the kingdom of God cometh not with observation is a truth that is enforced by the failure of every attempt that has been made to predict the times and the seasons of the coming of the Judge; and yet nothing is more evident than the fact that His way is preparing, and that each year marks more fully some progress definitely and clearly made in that work of preparation. The note of preparation is not always what the world calls a religious one—it is often indeed generally, what is regarded as entirely secular. Every advance in civilization, every step towards the betterment of the human race, whether in knowledge, in material welfare, or in spiritual advancement, is a sign of the Coming Lord, and that the promise of His Coming is sure.

The day of Christ's appearance is not to be determined by the fanciful interpretation of detached texts of Scripture. He Himself has said that it is not for human minds to know the times and the seasons, which the Father has put in His own power. The fulfilment of prophecy is not a thing that can be forced by any such proceeding as was recently seen in the formation of a railroad company with the design of hastening the fulfilment of a prophecy which the projectors chose to interpret as declaring that a railroad should run through Palestine. But in the events of the world's history can be seen each year how surely and steadily God is bringing on the day of the coming of the Son of Man. Even in the event of a short time since, when the American world witnessed the establishment of a uniform standard of time, though apparently a thoroughly secular event, and devised for the benefit of purely commercial interests, marked an era in the history of the human race that will one day be recognized as having an important bearing on the preparation of the world to meet the Lord at His coming.

The world does move, and it moves onward in that one direction, though men may think but little of it. The Church of Christ is the great instrumentality which He has ordained for the bringing in of His kingdom, and yet the greatest triumphs of that Church are not always

those that are most patent to human sight. The Holy Spirit prepared the way for the first Advent of the Saviour in a manner that the devout student of history can easily recognize now, but of which the nations of the earth, seeking only their own material advancement, were absolutely unconscious. And when the fullness of the time was come, the Anointed One appeared, to be the Saviour of the world. And so it is to day. The Holy Spirit is doing the same work; in the Church sanctifying the people of God, and uniting them with Christ; and in the world preparing the way for that Church, "the Saints of the Most High God," to take the kingdom, and go forth to meet the King when He shall come again.

The Advent thought is full of hope to the Christian, even when he looks upon the world as it now is. There is no advance, no real forward step in the history of mankind, that is purely secular and without its important bearing upon the advancement of Christ's kingdom. The Holy Ghost has His active objective work in the world as well as in the Church and He is performing it. The progress of thought, the advance of physical science, the great strides that civilization is making throughout the world through the levelling instrumentality of commerce, and the wonderful developments of human intellect and intelligence, are as much His work as the great progress which the Church of Christ is making in the world. And it is for the same end, the preparation of the world for the Coming of its Lord.

It is the hopeful mind, looking eagerly for the Master's approach, that is quick to discern the evidence that He gives of His drawing nigh. It was in the darkest days of persecution that the aged Apostle saw the glory of the coming Saviour, and uttered that hopeful prayer, "Even so, come Lord Jesus." There is no cause for doubt or fear in the mind of the Church's children to-day. On every side is seen "the promise of His coming."—*The Churchman.*

PROPORTION OF THE FAITH.

The beginning of a new Christian year brings with it the inquiry whether any one of the great facts concerning the Christ are lost sight of. The Christian religion is historical as much as it is doctrinal. The two great creeds are almost wholly occupied with statements of historical facts. It is on those facts that men's faith may depend. It is on the right holding of those facts that a right faith depends. No one of them must be held to the exclusion of another.

Therein lies a great comfort. Facts remain. They cannot be misunderstood. Doctrines may be perverted. The language of doctrinal statements may change its meaning, and so their meaning may be changed. But no man need ever forget events, or misunderstand them.

So the Church has handed down through all her centuries the facts of the Saviour's birth and life and death, His resurrection and ascension, His sitting at the right hand of the Father, and the assertion of His coming again, in future time.

These great facts do not contradict each other. They fill up and round out the Gospel of salvation. They are all, too, essential, and if any one loses sight of a single one of them all, his faith becomes disproportioned.

Now, very many seem to have lost sight of the great article of belief with which the Christian year opens. As certain and sure as any other article of the Christian story epitomized in the creeds is the assertion regarding the Christ that He now "sitteth on the right hand of the Father, and He shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead."