

The Church Guardian

— : EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR : —

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Editor, P. O. Box 504, Montreal. Exchanges to
P. O. Box 1968. For Business Announcements See page 15.

CALENDAR FOR OCTOBER.

Oct. 7—20th Sunday after Trinity.

" 14—21st Sunday after Trinity. [Notice of
St. Luke.

" 18—ST. LUKE. Evangelist.

" 21—22nd Sunday after Trinity.

" 28—23rd Sunday after Trinity. St. Simon
and St. Jude. A. & M. Athan.
Cr. Notice of All Saints.

"STRENGTH AND PEACE."

A SERMON Preached before the Diocesan Synod
of Nova Scotia, in St. Luke's Cathedral, Halifax,
June 22nd, 1894, by REV. FRANCIS PART-
RIDGE, D.D., Rector of St. George's Church,
Halifax; Canon of St. Luke's; and
Secretary of the Diocese.

THE LORD sitteth above the water flood ;
AND THE LORD remaineth a King for ever :
THE LORD shall give strength unto His people ;
THE LORD shall give His people the blessing of
peace.—*Psalms xxix. 10, 11.*

[CONTINUED.]

This regenerating force; this Society of noble
ideals; this kingdom of peace and love; thus
inspired, equipped and sent forth, must if united
be irresistible. First because the principles on
which it is based are divine. Second because
its conditions are craved by human nature, and
third because in themselves these principles
commend themselves to the human judgment
and conscience. In so far as, and while the
Kingdom was one, its members at unity, its
laws unrent, its ranks unbroken, its leaders
trusted and obeyed, the world bowed and fell be-
fore the Cross. Some fell upon the stone and
were broken. Upon others the stone fell, and
they were ground to powder. Three thousand
were baptized in a day. Whole dominions were
illuminated at once. The light of Gospel truth
beamed forth, not from within a lantern which
intercepted half its rays, but with the noonday
brilliance of the eastern sun.

Then came the seed of tares. Doubtless sin
yet reigned in human hearts. Temptations
fierce and strohg, raged with demoniac fury
within men's souls. They broke out into open
rebellion. Indulged individualism, that bitter
and lasting curse of Christianity through all
the ages, brought into action the hidden fires of
disunion and strife. And then it came that the
once bonded and irresistible truth was shattered
into a hundred fragments. Then followed
divided aims, enfeebled energies and crippled
work. The powers bestowed on the Church of
God for government and discipline were wrested
to engines of oppression. Corruption reigned
in high places. The rulers of the Church be-
came lords over God's heritage. Liberties
crushed, arose fragrant from their bruises. The
whole Church gradually presents the appear-
ance of a mirror distorted and defaced. The
gracious song of Love and Peace, of Fatherhood
and Sonship, of sweet communion of spiritual
intercourse, of glory to God, peace on earth, and

good will to men, sounds now like swiftly fading
echoes from a "broken lyre dropped from a
dead man's hand." Angry recrimination takes
the place of the accents of concord. Intoler-
ance that can see no good in any thing that
differs from men's own convictions has been
exchanged for the lowliness that esteems others
better than oneself. Internal warfare, fierce
and furious, takes the place too often of kindly
forbearance, brotherly conciliation, and calm
reflection. Work is spoiled, energy is wasted,
money is worse than thrown away, splendid
opportunities of winning, as at the first, whole
realms for Christ, are marred, lost, by the
wrangling of opposing forces, mutual jealousies,
and disingenuous misrepresentation.

O brethren beloved in Christ, is this the reli-
gion of the meek and lowly Jesus? Can the
cause of God be served thus? Christendom,
needs its sackcloth and ashes, its garb of deep-
est penitence, and with these the agony of sup-
plication for a return of the first love, for the
repetition of the first works!

For the enemy is thundering at the gates!
The sound of conquest in the air. The armies
of darkness are lining out their cohorts, and the
deadly weapons are burnished anew. Unbelief
lifts its unblushing head. Intemperance scorches
our best and noblest. Impurity presses on its
serpent fangs till our Christian literature is
saturated with it. Black Atheism, peering from
eyeless sockets, stretches out its skeleton fingers
eager for their prey, over the rising generation.
A soulless anarchy, destroying for destruction's
sake, heedless of suffering so that only dread
sink into men's lives: these and such as these
are the foes whose trenches are already dug,
whose parallels are even now drawn, and whose
mines are ever exploding! And the Church of
God is quarreling while the souls of her child-
ren perish, and the blood of the vanquished and
dying, over all the sounds of pious discord cries
aloud to God!

Does it not come like a blessing from angel's
lips, like a breath from the infinite calm.

THE LORD SITTETH ABOVE THE WATERFLOOD,
AND THE LORD REMAINETH A KING FOR EVER!

This is the state of the Church at large. But
should the test be applied to the condition of
our Branch of universal christendom, do we see
anything very different? It would not become
one appointed to speak here to-day to his
brethren, many of them more learned, more
experienced, and more spiritual than himself,
to refer too pointedly or in a fault-finding vein,
to evils only alas! too glaringly apparent. But
I appeal to you, brethren in the Lord and in the
sacred ministry of the gospel of Christ, do not
our finances languish, our missions stagnate,
our benevolent efforts sink to slumber, while we
war among ourselves? Is it not possible, may
it not for Christ's sake be accomplished, that
we each do our work, and use our best efforts
in the Masters holy cause, the winning of our
souls, the rescuing them from death eternal, the
commending to them the burning love of the
Lord who bought us, the drawing them with
cords of undying affection without forgetting
that in Him we are one?

To our own Master we stand or fall. Our
conscience is His voice, and He would not have
us do violence to its dictates. But party names,
and party strife, and the imputation of bad
motives, and the cruel stab in the back given
in the dark by the anonymous writer, can they
be compatible with the even handed justice and
transparency of Truth? Our Church is to us
as the apple of our eye. Her roots are struck
deep into the soil of Time, which is the soil of
Truth. She cannot be overthrown while her
candlestick is there. But do we not tempt the

*This simile is I believe the Bishop of
Derry's, though I cannot quite remember where
I read it.

Lord, by unbrotherliness and refusal; to make
any allowance for honest difference of opinion
in a Church which is the freest and yet the
most definite in the world, to take that candle-
stick away?

THE LORD SHALL GIVE STRENGTH UNTO HIS
PEOPLE: THE LORD SHALL GIVE HIS PEOPLE
THE BLESSING OF PEACE.

Yea to His people: to them that study His
inner laws, reflect His holiness, and set forth
his benign and gentle calmness, the Lord giveth
ever His strength.

How long shall it take His Church to find
out that violence is never strength? that super-
cilious pride and the contempt that is born of
self-conceit, only provokes resentment? How
long shall religion be weakened, enervated, by
proud assumptions of superiority, oftenest by
those whose claims to it are least? There is
force in the mighty tempest, which carries death
and destruction far and wide. There is force
in the devastating pestilence, which chills the
land with deadly fear, and leaves homes and
hearts desolate. But what is all this beside the
silent power of the summer sun, by which all
nature is irresistibly drawn into life and vigor;
whose magnetic attraction naught can stay,
which gives vitality every where, and compels
every living thing to offer its best and perfect
its destiny?

The Lord will give strength to His people.

Yes! forever yes!

The strength that is born of a good consci-
ence, that comes from a sense of right, that
stands on the foundation of safety. The Church
of God ever represents the things that can not
be shaken. The world's greatest engines of dis-
ruption have been used to crush her offered
truth; the flesh and the devil have exhausted
their wiles, and have been prodigal of their de-
vices to overwhelm her struggling children.
But in spite of wild criticism which is ever
changing its front and altering its mind; in the
face of defection and weak abandonment of out-
works; the central dogmas of Christianity, to
the maintenance of which the Church is pledged,
stand unshaken still. Belief in a personal God;
the existence and accountability of the soul;
the sense of sin; the redeeming love of God in
Jesus Christ; the establishing of the Church as
the instrument of the salvation of men; the
holy ministry of reconciliation, the sacraments,
the hope of heaven and the prospect of undying
service and unbroken harmony in the life to
come: these are the elements of a strength that
is lasting, that knows no fear because it is per-
fect in love. It is a strength that will endure,
that is willing to suffer, that can bear the strain
of injustice, that is not moved by desertion, that
triumphs over malice, that is above petty spite,
that never recriminates, that gathers ever
strength from the same eternal source, and that
is exercised more and more by forgiving!

Such a Church as this, and such Christians
as these, can afford to be large-hearted!

Finally. The Lord shall bless His people
with Peace.

Not the peace of corruption, as of dead bodies
which make no stir. Not the peace of indiffer-
ence, which, Gallio-like, cares for none of these
things. Not the peace of indolence, which
takes its ease and quietly watches the world
perish. Not the peace of dependance, which is
incapable of decision, and is always anxious that
some one else should take the responsibility.
Not the peace of ignorance, which rushes for
shelter to the spreading tree while the lightning
flashes are eager for their victim. Not the
peace of the fanatic, who in bigoted security
looks with unconcern on others who he thinks
are going to be damned while he shall enjoy the
green pastures of God's paradise. Not the
peace of stagnation which settles on its lees,
yet carries in its bosom the germs of death.
Not the peace of success, which, to last, must