

The Church Guardian

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CALENDAR FOR OCTOBER.

- Oct. 6th—16th Sunday after Trinity.
 " 13th—17th Sunday after Trinity. (Notice of St. Luke's Day.)
 " 18th—St. LUKE. *Evangelist.*
 " 20th—18th Sunday after Trinity.
 " 27th—19th Sunday after Trinity. (Notice of St. Simon and St. Jude and of All Saints)
 " 28th—St. SIMON and St. JUDE. Ap. & M.M. (Athanasian Creed)

ST. JUDE.

St. Jude's message to the Church is but short, yet it contains much matter for meditation. It is directed, not to the world, but to those whom the great Head of the Church has chosen out of the world—"to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved by Jesus Christ." The whole epistle is a call to vigilant and unceasing warfare. The apostle bids those whom he addresses to "contend earnestly," not for the honors or rewards of this world, but for their spiritual inheritance—"for the faith once delivered to the saints." He implies too, that the foes with whom they are to contend are to be found in their own household; "men who have crept in privily," or in disguise, and who even in the Church itself are working their wicked will, and abusing to their own destruction and that of others the best gifts of God. He speaks of the Lord's coming to judgment, and reminds his readers that they are not to be discouraged by the presence of these false brethren, since they had been expressly warned that such should come. Finally, the apostle closes with a command, which is also an encouragement; "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, and eternal life." "Keep yourselves in the love of God!" Why? Because that love is the very vital breath of the Christian, without which he can no more live than his bodily life can exist without the atmosphere. Because it is the sense of that love, which carries him over and through all discouragements; which makes his trials endurable, nay, blessed; which makes him desire and work for the salvation of others, and the spread of Christ's Kingdom among men.

There is a certain insect, which, though its lungs are fitted only to respire air, yet does not hesitate to dive to the bottom of the water and remain there as long as it finds needful. What is its secret? Simply this; when the little creature desires to seek the bottom of the stream, it contracts an airtight and transparent balloon, enveloping its whole body. This it fills with air, and so carrying its own atmosphere along with it, it exists in an element not only useless but adverse, which would destroy it at once without such protection.

As the silvery air bubble is to the little insect, so is the love of God to the Christian soul. Kept by this love, he passes through trials and temptations. By it he keeps himself unspotted from the world in which he must needs live. Afflictions may grieve him, the cross may be heavy, the world, the flesh, and the devil may allure and threaten by turns but so long as the Christian keeps himself in the love of God, there is light amid darkness, peace in conflict, joy in tribulation. But how are we to keep ourselves in this love? The apostle himself tells us, "By building ourselves up on our most holy faith." So long as we build on the foundation of an assured faith and trust in God's promises and His Word, so long the very gates of hell shall not prevail against us. By "praying always in the Spirit." By constant communion with that loving and giving Father in whom are all our fresh springs. By "looking for the mercy of our Lord, Jesus Christ unto eternal life." By faith, by prayer, by meditation on the word and on the joys to come, he is to keep himself in the love of God, and so to pass the waves of this troublesome world, that finally he shall come to the land of everlasting life, and that eternal Kingdom which our God has promised through Jesus Christ our Lord.—*L. H. G.—in Paris Visitor.*

THE MAKING OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

By the Rev. S. D. McConnell, D. D., in the
American Church Sunday School Magazine for November.

To clear the way, it must always be borne in mind that the Church was established, its organization complete, and the best part of its missionary work done *before it had any Bible* at all.

The modern notion of a missionary as a man who goes to the heathen with a Bible in his hand from which to enlighten the pagans, was inconceivable to an early Christian. "Bible Societies" are modern inventions, and are largely based on modern misconception. Our purpose is to find the true origin and purpose of the New Testament. The popular idea of the relation of the Bible to the Church has arisen for the most part since the era of "written constitutions." *The Church is older than the Bible.* More than one-half of the books of the Old Testament were written after the Mosaic institutions had been in existence hundreds of years. The *whole* of the New Testament came into existence *after the Church had been planted*. In the work of propagandism it (the Bible) was no part of the machinery.

It is well just now to lay emphasis on these well-known facts. In Protestant Christendom the Holy Scriptures have been popularly assigned a place which cannot be maintained. A burden has thus been laid on them which is, if not of a magnitude, at any rate of a kind which they are not able to bear. To remove the Bible from that place reverently, so that it will take no hurt, and tenderly, so that the superincumbent mass may not tremble, is a task from which it is idle in our day to think of escaping.

The way to ascertain the true place of the

Bible in the Church is to go back and find *how* its book *first* came to be there.

Let me remind you that the Church is builded not upon a Book but upon a *Person*. Everywhere the Apostles began their work by telling the story of the Cross and the Resurrection. If it were to a Jew the missionary was speaking he would proceed something like this:—"Brother," he would say, "you are waiting for the Messiah? You need not wait any longer. He has come. He was born forty years ago in Bethlehem in Judea, of Mary, the wife of Joseph. I have seen Him. I was present when He cured hundreds of sick and lame and blind. I stood beside Him one day at the door of a tomb and heard Him call to a man within who had been four days dead. I saw the man come out alive and wholesome! His words were the words of God. Listen to some of them as I remember them." [and then he rehearsed say the Sermon on the Mount, or John V.] "But alas! our people hated Him and compassed His death. He was crucified! Yes, He was crucified. We thought then for a little while that we had been deceived. But the third day after He rose from the dead, as our prophets have always said the Messiah would. I saw Him afterward myself. The nail-prints were still in His hands and feet, and the scar on His breast showed where the spear had gone. He told us many things about His new Society which I will tell you. Five weeks after, as we all stood about Him one day, out in the open light, He went up from among us, floating up, up into the clouds, and we saw Him no more. He was the Christ."

To the Jew there was nothing surprising in all this. He accepted the truth of the story and was baptized into the Society.

With the Gentiles, however, *i.e.*, the people whose blood *we* inherit, the case was different. They had had no prophets. There was no foundation laid. There was apparently no point of contact with them. Then the missionary, like St. Paul at Athens, fell back upon the universal instinct of the race and identified Jesus with "the unknown God."

The necessity for a written Gospel had not yet begun to press. Books of any kind were rare and very costly. Probably not one in ten of the Disciples could read, and fewer still could write. In the Orient "education" did not imply the ability to read. The *memory* took the place of the printed page. Tales, songs, histories, multitudes of proverbs, were in circulation among them, word for word, just as they had been for generations, without any part of them having been committed to writing. The professional story teller, as he squats in the bazaar today at Damascus or Cairo or Constantinople, tells his tales in the very words in which they have been handed down from his father and his grandfathers for generations. His hearers are as quick to notice and resent any deviation from the accepted form as is the child among us who wants the story told "the way you told it before."

Thus there quickly grew up an *Oral Gospel and Liturgy* which was substantially the same throughout the Church. Once it took shape it held it tenaciously, owing to the popular habit. The thing which in our day most nearly resembles this "Oral Gospel" is probably the "Ritual" of certain secret societies. In the Masonic Order, for example, the "work" is performed in a very lengthy form of English words, transmitted unchanged for certainly a hundred and fifty years.

Thus the Oral Gospel was long preserved in the Church and was sufficient for its needs. Even after it took written shape it was generations before it superseded the old method of promulgation.

Two things, however, made the writing of the Gospel desirable. The first was the breaking out of the Jewish wars and the consequent difficulty in communicating with the mother Church at Jerusalem. The Church there under