

# The Church Guardian

— EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR: —

L. H. DAVIDSON, D.C.L., MONTREAL.

— ASSOCIATE EDITORS: —

REV. H. W. NYE, M.A., Rector and Rural Dean, Bedford, P.Q.; REV. EDWYN S. W. PENTREATH, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Address Correspondence and Communications to the Editor, P.O. Box 504. Exchanges to P.O. Box 1950. For Business announcements See page 14.

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## CALENDAR FOR MAY.

MAY 1st—St. Phillip and St. James, A. & M.

" 2nd—1st Sunday after Easter.

" 9th—2nd Sunday after Easter.

" 16th—3rd Sunday after Easter.

" 23rd—4th Sunday after Easter.

" 30th—5th Sunday after Easter.

(Notice of Rogation Days and Ascension Day.)

" 31st—Rogation Day.

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## THE CHURCH IN ITS RELATIONS TO OUR COMMON LIFE.

As one of the grand cathedrals which adorn our mother-land may be viewed alone, standing in its proper isolation from the habitations of men, and from the scenes of their industry, though in their midst, so the Church may be contemplated apart and alone; but it may be also viewed, and it is best viewed, in its relation to the common life around, which it seeks to embrace in its fellowship, and to purify by its ministrations. It is a grand, it is the grandest, the most noble, the most beneficent institution known amongst men. Founded by Divine authority for ends the most exalted, it may be regarded in its origin, its progress, and its end; in its organization, its methods, and its instruments; or in its history and its widespread influence, its past struggles, its present position, its assured future triumph. Viewed in its widest comprehension, it is the Holy Catholic Church. It embraces the godly of all ages and of all climes, it numbers in its ranks the purest, the most heroic, and the most charitable, and, stretching its arms far and wide, it gathers of every kind within the embrace of its charity and effort. In its more limited aspect, it is "Christ's Church militant here on earth," divided, struggling, and imperfect—imperfect alike in the spiritual condition of its individual members, in the range of its knowledge, in the fervor of its zeal, and in the warmth of its charity. It may be thought of in its struggle with the world—the world of

evil, error and self-seeking; and here rise into view its many ministries, its precious services to classes, tribes and nations of men. It is enriched by the truths it is commissioned to proclaim, by the pure morality it is commanded to illustrate, by its lofty ethical code reaching to all conditions and embracing the duties of all the relations of men, by its spiritual illumination, its sacred records, its Divine ordinances. It finds its encouragement in the life which is the simplest and, at the same time, the most sublime illustration of the truths which it teaches, and the typical example up to which it exhorts all its members to strive to grow. No grace can adorn the human life that it does not acknowledge to be within the compass of its duty to cultivate. It exalts conscience, it promotes righteousness, peace and truth. It insists on honorableness in trading, fidelity in trust, patience in suffering, purity in thought, unselfishness in action. It rejoices in the progress, the refinement, the joy, the utmost welfare of all. It promotes learning, it cultivates taste, it refines habits. It cannot neglect to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to bless the enemy, without doing violence to its own canons of conduct, and contradicting the very spirit it seeks most of all to diffuse. It teaches, illustrates and promotes the truest, the purest and the most rational brotherhood of men. Nor are these the limits of the Church's work. To bow the head in reverent worship before the Creator of all worlds and the Judge of all men, and to teach men so; to proclaim the Gospel of the world's Divine Redeemer; to invoke upon all men the grace of the Holy Spirit; to publish laws of which it is the custodian, that are applicable to all races of men and all periods of time, form part of an imposed duty which it is the Church's joy to fulfil. It honors age, seeking to make the hoary head a crown of glory. It blesses childhood, finding in its simplicity and teachableness the typical example of its neophyte, and, in its great Master's name, it pronounces words of blessing over its young life, sealing the dedication of that life unto the Lord by His own appointed sign. Its songs are the expression of the holiest aspirations of the human heart; its hopes transcend the present, for, while setting before the eyes of men the purest ideal of human life, it sets before the hopes of men the loftiest conceptions of human happiness. The Church ministers to the sick, comforts the sorrowful, relieves the poor with its charity, and warns the wicked with its word. It soothes the dying with the consolations of hope, and brings to the bereaved in their tearfulness the comfortable assurance of "the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come." Smiling upon whatever tends to refine, exalt and enrich the human life, the Church knows no antagonism but to whatever impairs human blessedness, or darkens the horizon of human hopes, or withers the strength of human virtue.—Selected.

## UNBELIEF AND SECTARIANISM.

We have frequently insisted that the existence of the uncalled-for and sinful divisions of Christendom contributes to the infidelity of the age, and stronger testimony to the truth of this position perhaps could hardly be adduced

than that furnished by the famous Mr. Spurgeon, of London, England, in a Sunday morning sermon lately preached by him in his "Tabernacle." He is reported to have said:—

"To-day the revelation of God is treated with indifference, or talked of as if it deserved no reverence or credit. Unbelief has sapped the foundations of the social fabric. Worst of all—I must not hold back the charge—many of the avowed ministers of Christ are no ministers of the faith at all, but promoters of unbelief. *The modern pulpit has taught men to be infidels.* Think not that I am aiming at the Church of England. With all my objection to a State Church, I am not so unjust as to conceal my belief, that I see in the Episcopal Church at this time *LESS of unbelief than among certain Dissenters; in fact, Nonconformity in certain quarters is eaten through and through with a covert Unitarianism, less tolerable than Unitarianism itself.* So frequently are the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel assailed, that it becomes needful, before you cross the threshold of many a chapel to ask the question, "Shall I hear the Gospel here to-day, or shall I come out hardly knowing whether the Bible is inspired or not? Shall I not be made to doubt the Atonement, the work of the Holy Ghost, the immortality of the soul, the punishment of the wicked, or the deity of Christ?" I know I shall stir a hornet's nest by these honest rebukes, but I cannot help it. *I am burdened and distressed with the state of religion; a pest is in the air; no truth is safe from its withering infection.*"

## THE CHIEF OBJECT OF CONFIRMATION.

The following remarks, which we take from our valued exchange, *The Church Standard* (New York), will be found specially *apropos* now that in many of our Canadian dioceses the annual visitation of the Bishop is either in progress or is about to commence:—

What is Confirmation? What is that solemn rite that year by year the Bishop comes to the Church to administer? What is this ceremony that, not for a hundred years, but ever since the days of the Apostles, has been faithfully observed by the Church?

Each person to whom the questions are addressed will probably give a different answer. But three replies may be sufficient to give a clear idea of the subject. We will consider them in order:

I. It is common to speak of Confirmation as the renewal of our Baptismal vows, or the taking of our vows upon ourselves. And this is a correct answer. The Prayer Book says that it is a convenient and proper thing for children, having learned what their godfathers and godmothers promised for them in Baptism, with their own mouth and consent to ratify and confirm the same.

It is indeed right and proper that children should be permitted to say: "We know the covenant our sponsors made for us; we know the obligations that they placed us under; and now we, having come to years of discretion, gladly assume these vows." Not that they would be released from these obligations, if they did not voluntarily undertake them. A child has to obey the laws of the community in which he lives. His parents have to see that he does so. For whatever damage he does while a minor, the law holds his parents and guardians responsible. But when he attains to manhood, he has to take upon himself all such obligations. He has to pay taxes, obey the laws, and do his duty as a citizen, whether he