

# The Church Guardian

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## Special Notice.

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### CALENDAR FOR SEPTEMBER.

- SEPT. 4th—13th Sunday after Trinity.  
 " 18th—14th Sunday after Trinity.  
 " 18th—15th Sunday after Trinity. [No-  
 tice of St. Matthew and Ember Days.  
 " 21st—St. MATTHEW.  
 " 21st }  
 " 23rd } EMBER DAYS.  
 " 24th }  
 " 25th—16th Sunday after Trinity. [Notice  
 of St. Michael and All Angels.  
 " 29th—St. Michael and All Angels.

### HISTORICAL SKETCH

OF THE

### PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

1784—1884.

By Right Rev'd William Stevens Perry, D.D.,  
L.L.D., Bishop of Iowa.—Continued.

In September and October, 1785, there assembled in Philadelphia the first gathering of clergy and laity that might properly be regarded as a general convention. The Church in seven States was represented by sixteen clergymen and twenty-six laymen. The New England churches were not represented. The work of organization and the revision of the Prayer-book were at once undertaken. In fact, the conservative provision of the "fundamental principal," adopted at the preliminary meeting in New York, was lost sight of, and in place of the revision of the liturgy, with a view to provide simply for the alterations required by a change in the civil relations of the Church, it was decided to make "further alterations," the result of which appeared soon after the convention rose, in the "Proposed Book." A plan for obtaining from the English Archbishops and Bishops the consecration of Bishops was adopted, as was also a draft of an ecclesiastical constitution. The liturgical alterations proposed, for they were never adopted, by the American Church, contemplated the omission from the Apostles' Creed of the article, "He descended into Hell," and the rejection of the Nicene and Athanasian symbols. The Articles of Religion were reduced to twenty. A pro-face, chiefly the work of the celebrated Dr. William Smith, was prefixed to the proposed Prayer-book. The offices were abbreviated. A calendar and table of holy days were set forth, a service for the Fourth of July was appointed, and numerous verbal changes were introduced. But the "Proposed Book" proved unsatisfactory, and even its tentative use was confined to a few. The volume almost immediately sunk into obscurity, and it is said that the bulk of

the edition was condemned to the use of the trunk makers.

In June, 1786, the convention assembled in Philadelphia, "under circumstances," to quote the language of Bishop White, "which bore strong appearances of a dissolution of the union." The answer of the English Archbishops and Bishops to the application for the consecration of American Bishops had been cautious, and revealed an apprehension on the part of the prelates of the Mother Church that the American churchmen were verging toward unsoundness in the faith. A jealousy of the Bishop of Connecticut had grown up in the minds of some, and a spirit of unfriendliness toward the Churches and churchmen at the North was apparent by the attempted, as well as the accomplished, action of the convention. But a conservative spirit in other respects was shown in some important changes made in the ecclesiastical constitution, and the Convention was not a little influenced by the wise counsels of a memorial from the Convention of the Church in New Jersey, which had been prepared by the celebrated Thomas Bradbury Chandler. The Convention adjourned, to meet in October, after renewed assurances had been made that there was no purpose of departing from the English Church in doctrine, discipline, or worship, further than the circumstances of the changed civil relations of the Church rendered imperative. At the autumnal meeting, which was held at Wilmington, in Delaware, the reply of the English Archbishops and Bishops was received, and brought with it the assurance that the wish of the American Church for the succession in the English line wanted but a little of full accomplishment. At the instance of the English prelates the omitted article in the Apostles' Creed was restored, the representative of New Jersey and South Carolina voting in the affirmative, and those of New York, Pennsylvania, and Delaware, being divided. The Nicene Creed was unanimously restored. The Athanasian Creed was again rejected, but one clergyman and two laymen voting in its favor. Testimonials of Dr. White and Provost, the Bishops-elect of Pennsylvania and New York, were signed, and the application of the Rev. Dr. William Smith, the Bishop-elect of Maryland, for a similar recommendation, was refused. Shortly after the convention rose, the Bishops-elect sailed for England, and on Sunday, the 4th of February, 1787, received the Episcopate at Lambeth Chapel, at the hands of the two Archbishops, and the Bishops of Bath and Wells, and Peterborough.

In 1789, the convention met on the 28th of July, in Philadelphia. An application from the clergy of Massachusetts and New Hampshire, inspired by the amiable and excellent Parker, subsequently Bishop of Massachusetts, asking for the consecration of Dr. Bass to the Episcopate by the three Bishops now in the country, led to the adoption of measures of union between the Churches of the North under Seabury and those in the Middle and Southern States. The validity of the consecration of Seabury was formally acknowledged, and although the consecration of a third Bishop in the English line was subsequently accomplished, still in an adjourned session, which met on the 29th of September, and continued in session until the 16th of October, 1789, the Church was happily united, and there being three Bishops, agreeably to the Ecclesiastical Constitution, the House of Bishops was organized, Bishop Seabury being the first presiding Bishop. The adoption of a Prayer-book followed, with few variations from the English service-book, and psalms in metre with hymns were set forth. Eight canons were enacted and certain modifications of the Constitution secured. Thus happily the union of the churches, so long at variance, was effected, and from the year 1789, dates both the present Prayer-book and the General Conven-

tion of the Church. Dr. Madison had been consecrated at Lambeth on the 13th of September, 1790, and on the 17th of September, 1792, the first American consecration, that of Dr. Thomas John Claggett, of Maryland, took place, Bishop Provost being the consecrator, assisted by Bishops Seabury, White, and Madison. At the Convention in New York, at which this solemn ceremonial took place, the ordinal was revised and set forth, and measures were inaugurated for providing "missionaries to preach the gospel on the frontiers of the United States." The consideration of the Articles was postponed, and a scheme for the comprehension of the Methodist body was debated. This plan of union, which was specially favored by Bishop Madison, but which, though countenanced by the Bishops, failed of the approval of the House of Deputies, produced no results.

Owing to the presence of epidemic disease in Philadelphia, the convention of 1795 was but thinly attended, and from this cause no convention assembled in 1798. The following year, in July, a convention was held in Philadelphia, the Church in eight States being represented by nineteen clerical and ten lay deputies. A form of consecration of a church or chapel was set forth at this session, and seventeen articles were reported, though not adopted. The Church was thus, at the close of the century, organized and ready for growth and development.

It was but to be expected that the period of organization should be succeeded by a time of depression and retrogression. The death, one by one, of the older clergy, who had to a large extent come from England, found few prepared to take up the ministerial work. The lesson of self-sustentation was to be learned now that the stipends freely dispensed by the venerable Society were withdrawn. Besides, an *anglo-phobia* and a widespread adoption of the manners and disbelief of the French, reduced religion to a low ebb, and made the Church, though no longer by name or dependence of England, yet distrusted and disliked. The historian of the Church in Virginia speaks of the "gloomy darkness" which prevailed at this period of the Church's history, and notices the general absence of spiritual life and zeal. By a strange Providence the act of the Virginia Assembly confiscating the glebes and other Church property, which had been resisted in the courts in consequence of its manifest illegality, became of force, by the death of the Presiding Judge of the Appellate Court the very night before he would have promulgated the decision, already prepared and written out, by which the Church's rights would have been affirmed. The result of this decision was disastrous. There seemed little hope that the Church would ever rise to life again. The episcopate of Madison, whose labors had all along been hindered by his obligations to the Colleges of William and Mary, of which he was the head, closed under circumstances that seemed to render it doubtful if there would be an attempt even to elect a successor. In Maryland and Delaware, the spiritual condition was much the same as in Virginia. The application of New Jersey for the consecration of Dr. Uzal Ogden, as the first Bishop of this See, was refused by the General Convention of 1801, and the unsuccessful aspirant for the episcopate took refuge among the Presbyterians, with whom he had long been in sympathy. In New York, Dr. Provost had voluntarily terminated his episcopate by resignation, and although the House of Bishops refused to regard this act as final, the Bishop retired from the exercise of his function, and the administration of the diocese was intrusted to an assistant or coadjutor, the Rt. Rev. Dr. Benjamin Moore. At the southward the Church made little progress, and at some sections seemed to decrease. In New England there was perhaps a healthier condition, but it was still "the day of small things," so far as