

The Church Times.

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"Evangelical Truth--Apostolic Order."

W. Gossip---Publisher.

VOL. VI.

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, SATURDAY, OCT. 15, 1853.

NO. 42.

Calendar.

CALENDAR WITH LESSONS.

Day & Date	MORNING.	EVENING.
S. Oct. 16	1st B. of Trin.	1st Gal. 2
17	2nd B. of Trin.	2nd Gal. 3
18	3rd B. of Trin.	3rd Gal. 4
19	4th B. of Trin.	4th Gal. 5
20	5th B. of Trin.	5th Gal. 6
21	6th B. of Trin.	6th Gal. 7
22	7th B. of Trin.	7th Gal. 8

Poetry.

FOR THE CHURCH TIMES.

THE COMET.

THOU Comet! that through space
Mov'st on—and on—with unabated force;
Mocking the lightning in thy rushing course,
Outstripping, in thy race,
Each swiftly moving orb, how fast so'er,
Do urg'd its flight in its allotted sphere.

Unknown thy agency!
Thy destination and thy path unknown!
Thy mighty Maker hath around thee thrown
A veil of mystery!
And vainly hath the keen, mist-piercing eye
Of Science, sought thy secrets to descry.

Thou spread'st thy flaming tail,
While Zenith-climbing, to the horizon's verge;
Vast effluence! whence pallid stars emerge,
Looking more wan and pale,
As though appall'd by their proximity,
Strange wanderer of the starry realms! to thee.

Dark Ignorance, amaz'd,
Trembles thy fiery visage to behold!
Deeming, in it, (like mystic scroll unroll'd,)
The vision'd Future trac'd;
And, in thy advent fearful, thinks that he,
Dire Pestilence, and thrones o'erturned can see.

Blind Superstition's dreams!
Thou art thy Maker's work magnificent!
Beauty and Majesty are in thee blent,
With bright commingled beams;
And mortals, to whose sight thou art display'd,
Know only this, in vain thou wast not made.

Propell'd by force divine!
Thou rushest past our system's flying stars;
And, slow the motion of their glittering cars,
Compar'd with speed of thine;
As, loosely cast thy fiery courser's rein,
Thy flight thou urgest o'er the ethereal plain.

What splendours in thy way
Meet thou behold, oh, wild, erratic orb!
Dost thou from other suns than ours, absorb
The streaming, golden ray?
Do habitants of other systems view,
Amaz'd, as we, thy course the heavens through?

Vain questionings are these!
Unanswerable still! and so to be,
Till time is merg'd in vast Eternity,
And all those mysteries
Shall (rent the veil that hides them from our
sight,)
Burst on our senses in effulgence bright.

SHELBURNE.

A. B.

Religious Miscellany.

A CHARGE

ADDRESSED TO THE CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF CANTERBURY—BY THE RIGHT HONORABLE AND REVD. JOHN BIRD SUMNER, D. D., ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.*

Government of the Ministry in the Church.

Since, however, the apostolical epistles were commonly and chiefly addressed to the baptised, we should surely hear in them some mention of matters so important as confession and absolution if they were indeed a part of the general system of the Gospel, or part of the general discipline of the Church. The difference on this point between the Apostolic and Romish preacher must carry conviction to every unprejudiced enquirer. They who profess to retain and forgive sins—to estimate the degree of penance which different wants require, and make the business of confession and absolution an important part of minis-

terial duty—are most minute in their directions and instructions on this subject, as laid down in elaborate treatises which demand a long course of preparation. Now, St. Paul has left us three epistles, in which he prescribes rules both of a general and particular nature, applicable to the Government of the ministry of the Church. It must be accounted remarkable that he has not given a single hint on the subject which is made most prominent in the qualification of a minister of the Church of Rome. It cannot be said that he had no opportunity of doing this. He warns Timothy of admitting to office in the Church those who might disgrace it by inconsistent conduct. He prescribes no penance for offences—no absolution after which he might be rewarded to favour. He enjoins that those that sin should be rebuked before all, that they and others might be ashamed. No confession, no penance, no absolution. He alludes to those who offer themselves, and desires that they should be instructed in meekness, if God peradventure may give them repentance, to recover themselves out of the power of the tempter. Would the Romish preacher stop here? Here is prescribed no means of penance—no absolution. We have, therefore, no authority from the apostles for the system, the want of which has been complained of as a defect in the Church of England; and what the apostles have not sanctioned, either by word or example, our Lord by implication condemns. He had said to a proselyte man—"Thy sins be forgiven."—The Pharisees murmured at this, and asked, "Why does this man speak blasphemously! Who can forgive sin but God only?" It was an opportunity for announcing a purpose to be afterwards fulfilled—for saying that the time would come when the power of absolution would be committed to man—as, on another occasion, the Lord put aside an objection urged by His disciples that they fasted not, by foretelling the season when they would be obliged to fast. The reply was really a confirmation of the truth, that none can forgive sins save God only. "That ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins"—thus saith he to the sick of the palsy, "Arise, take up thy bed and walk." Do that which God alone can enable thee to do. If, therefore, we can be satisfied to take our views from Scripture, we cannot justly complain of our Reformed Church because confession, penance, and absolution form no part of her requirements or regulation. Still less can we admit it as a defect, as it is also called, that she has made no addition to the ordinances established by the Lord himself, or commanded ceremonies whether useful or superstitious, or particular states of life.

The Church Placed above Scripture by the Romanists.

But the primary error, and that to which all other may be traced, is in forming an idea of the Church which the Scripture does not warrant—an idea which virtually transfers to the Church itself, acting through her ministers the power and authority which really and solely belongs to the Church's Divine Head and Founder. I need not say that this is the result of those pretensions which are put forward by the Church of Rome. The Romish Church claims a special commission derived to her through St. Peter, who was appointed its vicegerent on earth, to open or shut the kingdom of heaven, and whose authority descended through successive ages, being vested in the Bishop of Rome. Acting on this presumption, the ministers of that Church profess to ensure salvation with a confidence which no Reformed Church has ever ventured to assume. They say, virtually, "Commit yourselves to the Church, and there is nothing to be afraid of. The Scripture interprets Scripture for you—secures you from the errors which you would surely feel without such an infallible guide. The Church also has power to avert the consequences of those sins, negligences, and ignorances, of which your hearts are conscious—confess and absolve you by that authority which God committed to the apostle Peter, chief apostle, the rock on which the Church is built. The authority which he first possessed is committed to other faithful men, who continued it in an unbroken line of succession to the Church of Rome—that Church which to you and all men is to what the ark was to Noah and his family—enter it, and ye are saved; all that are without, the deluge will overwhelm." The person, whose departure from us we

have very much reason to regret, acknowledges that he was led step by step till he became convinced that union with Rome is necessary to the vitality of the branch. With most of those who have left us, this has been the chief ground of their perversion. And others, who, though withheld from taking the final step, are in that hesitating and doubtful state respecting continuance in the Church, the foundation which must keep them strangers to that peace and comfort which are the privileges of the confirmed believer. I feel tempted, therefore, to drop a few remarks in confident hope of showing that there is no scriptural ground for such apprehension.

The Church a Community of Christians.

Often as the word "Church" occurs in the New Testament, as distinguished from its primary sense as an assembly, it uniformly admits of one and the same construction. It signifies a body of believers in Jesus Christ—a congregation of Christians, whether collected in a particular spot or dispersed throughout the world. This term "Holy Catholic Church" is correct—holy, as the Jews were—a holy nation—a chosen generation—a peculiar people; and Catholic, because, however scattered, holding the same general truths—confessing one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all. This body—acknowledging Jesus Christ as the Saviour of man, professing that faith, and being baptised in His name—this body is the Church of God. It may be small—it might at one time have comprised no more than the company of apostles; or it may be large, as when the number of believers had increased to 5,000 at Jerusalem. It may be pure, consisting of those alone—who are renewed in the spirit of their minds; or it may be composed of those who are ignorant, and who continue hearers only, and not doers of the word. It may be an isolated community, as of those who called themselves Christians first at Antioch; or it may be a multitude of indefinite extent, so as to comprehend all the nations of the earth. But still it is of the same nature and character, neither more nor less than a community of Christians. How, then, has it happened that this has been lost sight of by many who speak the Church's language, which properly belongs to our salvation? How is it they have inquired, not for the true faith, but the true Church ascribed to divine power, and who are never satisfied unless they believe they are within its pale to enjoy its privileges? As different congregations of Christians were formed during the progress of the Gospel, each congregation became a Church; and being placed within the pale of that salvation which was granted to faith and promised to all believers. Whosoever, therefore, was to be saved, was to be added to the Church—that is, a company of the faithful. And as many as did were saved—were delivered from condemnation—all were placed in a way of salvation. In this sense it is a true saying that salvation was in the Church, and there was no salvation out of it. The Church believed in Christ—Christ is the author of salvation, because, as Tertullian wrote "Where Christ is there is the Church." It follows that where Christ is, and not elsewhere, is salvation. Irenæus wrote to the same purpose, "they who do not resort to the Church defereth life through perverseness, for where the Church is there is the spirit of God—where the Spirit is, there is the Church." Thus far nothing can be more plain than that salvation is in the Church and in that alone. But this truth was greatly perverted till it led to the most dangerous conclusion, the Church was made to occupy the place which can only belong to the great Head and Author of the Church—a conclusion too flattering to the passions, and too alluring to the interest of man, not to be adopted and encouraged. To give importance to the members of the Church, and especially to those who bear rule, on whom it depended to admit to its privileges or exclude from them, they thus appropriated to them sentences which Christ had addressed to his immediate apostles, and by an ingenious process, or a metaphorical expression, invested themselves with power God never intended for man; so that, ultimately, what had at first been a company of believers in the Church, the rulers of the Church took in the place of Christ Himself, and persuaded men that Christ had delegated His authority to His ministers, actually employing His ministers as the sole interpre-

Continued from last week.