

The Church Guardian

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CALENDAR FOR JUNE.

- JUNE 4—1st Sunday after Trinity.
 " 11—2nd Sunday after Trinity. ST. BARBARA.
 " 3rd Sunday after Trinity. [*Notice of St. John Baptist.*]
 " 24—ST. JOHN BAPTIST. [*Athanasian Cr.*]
 " 25—4th Sunday after Trinity. [*Notice of St. Peter.*]
 " 29—ST. PETER.

NOTES ON THE EPISTLES.

BY THE REV. H. W. LITTLE, RECTOR HOLY TRINITY, SUSSEX, N.B.

(Author of "Arrows for the King's Archers," etc.)

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

"Be ye all of one mind."—1 Pet. iii, 8.

1. The purpose of the Apostle in writing this Epistle was to "strengthen the brethren," (St. Luke xxii, 32.) Those whom he addressed were "scattered" throughout a wide area from Pontus to Bithynia. This dispersion was an element of weakness. Dwelling among the heathen, and parted asunder church from church, these "strangers" or pilgrims (comp. ii, 11) were exposed to special dangers and anxieties, and temptations to laxity of faith and conduct. The Epistle, therefore, contains concise references to the root truths of Christian doctrine—The Incarnation—The Atonement—The doctrine of the New Birth by the Spirit.

II. The necessity, use and transitory nature of all earthly trials, and the obligation of the Christian life, and the following of the example of Christ, are pressed home with much force and tenderness. Practical advice as to the duty of the baptised in every relation of life, e.g.,

citizens slaves, husbands, wives, etc., is given with clearness and firmness, (ii, 13, iii, 8.) The blessedness of submission to duty, civil and domestic, as the outcome of sincere Christian humility, is shown to be in the sight of God of great price, as well as a security from molestation and persecution from unbelievers.

III. The elect are stirred up, as begotten again of God, to exhibit an honest conversation generally, i., by preserving unity or "oneness" of mind. Unity is strength. A "oneness" not superficial, but real "of mind." How essential this grace is to the progress and full vigour of The Church as a body, and of its members as individuals, may be gathered from the Great High Priestly prayer of Christ on the eve of the crucifixion. It was to be a proof of the Divine origin of the Christian brotherhood, a visible token of its being in Christ, as Christ is in God. Nothing less than this. But this unity could only be possible where compassion, tenderness in treatment of others, and courtesy and humility were earnestly cultivated and encouraged. Respect for others, their opinions, their character; readiness to consider and weigh the thoughts of others; a humble and sincere trust in "the brethren," and a desire to meet their wishes, even at the expense of sacrifice of one's own opinion, in matters non-essential or secondary, will do much to preserve "unity" among Christian people, and this a duty second to none in its importance; although alas! in our own day lightly esteemed. It is easier to break than to mend, and the sin of those who lightly disturb the peace of The Church, or break up the "oneness" of the body, from a mere wanton love of pre-eminence, or from self-will, or from hardness of temper and want of humility, incur an awful responsibility in that they dishonour Him "who is our peace" and who came to bring "peace on earth, good will to men of good will." The age is prone to self-will, and there is great need of such practical exhortations as are given in this passage. The method of the world is to be no guide to the Christian in the conduct of Christian men. "Blessing" is to be returned for "evil," not "railing for railing."

IV. Life in all its fullness and power, and days of joyous happy usefulness are for him who keeps tongue from evil words and lip from insincerity. Evil is to be cast out. Good is to be done. Peace is to be sought after as a priceless treasure worth labouring for and following after. So long as suffering and distress was not the result of their own faults, so long would they be able to walk firmly and evenly happily in the midst of "fiery trials;" no real harm, no mortal hurt, could come to those who were followers of that which is good. "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts," i. e.: Set up God in your hearts, as your God and Lord, and whenever there is occasion, confess Him before men, and, when you are asked, give an account of the hope and faith you possess, with all meekness to their authority, if they be your superiors, the kings and magistrates which are set over you, and with all care to approve yourselves to God. (See Phil. ii.)

A GLANCE AT THE COLLECTS FOR JULY.

(From the American Church S. S. Magazine for July, Philadelphia.)

Our Sunday Collects for this present month include those from the Fifth to the Ninth Sundays after Trinity. After our general introductory remarks upon the Trinity Collects in our last month's article, we can now proceed at once to a brief consideration of some of the chief characteristics of those precious prayers of the Church, which we are now to be called upon to make especially our own. They may all be traced back beyond the Anglican Prayer Book

—those for the Fifth and Ninth Sundays being found in the Sacramentary of Leo; and those for the Sixth, Seventh and Eighth, in that of Gelasius.

The prayer contained in the Collect for the Fifth Sunday is for "the peace of the world;" and the object of a "world peacefully ordered by Jehovah's acknowledged governance," is to obtain "a Church which may joyfully serve Him in all godly quietness." "The Ancient Leonine Collect for this day seems to have been suggested," says Mr. Bright, "like several of the same age, by the disasters of the dying Western Empire. It has however, a plain connection with the Gospel, which was probably selected at an earlier date. It is the account of the miraculous draught of fishes; and which like others of our Lord's miracles, was a parable as well, in which He was teaching the Apostles principles respecting their future work. The sea is the world, the net is the Church, the Apostles are fishers of men, Christ is He, who in the spiritual as in the actual world, bids them let down the net, and also gathers into it the great multitude of fishes. Very significant is it then, that with this parabolic miracle in the Gospel, the Collect should pray Him, Whose presence was the wealth and safety of the fishermen, that he will so order the waves of this troublesome world, that the Ark of the Church may ever ride over them in peace, and serve Him by gathering souls into her nets with all godly quietness through the blessing of the Saviour's presence."

The subject of the Collect for the Sixth Sunday is "God's love to man, and man's love to God." It consists of (1) A pleading of the good things which God has prepared for those who love Him; (2) A prayer for the love of God, that we may obtain His promises. Its doctrine is based on St. Paul's quotation from Isaiah in 1, Cor. 2; 9: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." We have both parts of this text in "the invocation" of the original Collect and its translation. In the original Collect, we read: "O God who hast prepared for them that esteem thee *invisible* good things;" i. e., good things which "eye hath not seen;" while in the translation, the good things are "such as pass man's understanding;" i. e., such as "have not entered into the heart of man." The original of "the aspiration" on the other hand, seems to contain more than the translation. It reads: "That we loving Thee *in* all things and *above* all things;" thus implying that the love of God Himself must precede the love of those good things which He has destined for us; and that our love towards God is itself a gift from God.

The subject of the Collect for the Seventh Sunday is the "Lord of all power and might" regarded as "the Author and Giver of all good things." It very naturally consist of (1) An address to God as the source of all power and all good; and then (2) A prayer that he may—(a) Graft in our hearts the love of His name; (b) Increase in us true religion; (c) Nourish us with all goodness; (d) Keep us in this love, and religion and goodness. It has expressions in it which seem to connect its prayer with both the Epistle and Gospel for the day. The Epistle (Rom. 6: 19-23) sets forth (1) the condition of the natural man, the fruit of whose life is death; (2) The duty imposed upon those who have been freed from sin, to bring forth fruits unto holiness, the end of which is everlasting life. The Gospel (St. Mark 8: 1-9) is the record of the feeding of the four thousand, a miracle which strikingly illustrates the opening words of the Collect, "Lord of all power and might, who art the Author and Giver of all good things." It is from Him we derive the daily bread which we need both for our souls and bodies, and as so plainly declared in His discourse on the Bread of Life. On the other