

The Church Guardian

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CALENDAR FOR MAY.

- MAY 1st—St. Philip and St. James.
 " 3rd—5th Sunday after Easter.
 " 4th }
 " 5th } Rogation Days.
 " 6th }
 " 7th—Ascension Day. Pr. Pss. M. 8, 15, 21
 E. 24, 47, 108. Athan. Creed.
 Pr. Prof. in Com. Service.
 " 10th—Sunday after the Ascension.
 " 17th—Whitsunday. Pr. Pss., M. 48, 68,
 Ev. 104, 145. Athan. Cr.: Pr.
 Prof. in Com. Service till 23rd,
 Notice of Monday and Tuesday,
 and Ember Days.
 " 18th—Monday in Whitsun week.
 " 19th—Tuesday in Whitsun week.
 " 20th— }
 " 22nd— } Ember Days.
 " 23rd— }
 " 24th—Trinity Sunday. Ath. Cr. Pr. Prof.
 in Communion Service.
 " 31st—1st Sunday after Trinity.

THE CHURCH IN HER RELATIONS TO SECTARIANISM.

(By the Rev. Erastus W. Spalding, D.D., Dean of All Saints Cathedral, Milwaukee, Wis.)

The great principle of the Divine Nature is love—"God is love." It is the very essence of His being. "He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love."

The manifestation of the Divine Love to man is in Christ Jesus. In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent His Only Begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. "No man hath seen God at any time; the Only Begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." Christ was the "Image of the invisible God"; the Brightness of His glory and express of His Person.

So Christ living, working, suffering, telling the exact truth concerning things in heaven and earth, in eternity and in time, showed God's love. Not only in what He did and said and suffered did He show it, but also in His manner of doing and speaking and suffering, in His

gentleness, goodness, patience, purity. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour"; and Christ "went about doing good." And it was in this way that He challenged the love of man, which God had lost and, with infinite yearning, was trying to win back to Himself. Especially did He do this in His suffering for the truth. In reference to its final culmination He said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me."

The Church is the continued expression and manifestation of this love of God, from age to age. Individuals die, corporations live. As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children's children. The Church is the "Mercy of the Lord," and "His righteousness unto children's children." "I will build my Church; and the gates of hell (oblivion) shall not prevail against it." "The Church, which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all,"—i.e., the fulness of God.

Indeed the Church became the eternal continuance of Christ in the world. God did not give His glory to another. He did not turn away the affections of man from Himself to something else. The Church being Christ's Body, is the extension of His Incarnation. It is the expansion, so to speak, of the human nature which He took from the Blessed Virgin. He miraculously expands and extends that cleansed humanity as He once multiplied the five barley loaves and the two small fishes.

So the Church is called Christ. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ." "For we are members of His Body, of His Flesh, and of His Bones."

And, being thus an expression of the Love of God and a manifestation of Christ still dwelling among men through His descendants, the Church became the "Family" of God. The terms applied to human redemption are, to a marvellous and significant extent, family terms—terms expressive of household ties and affections. The purest and most unselfish of all affection is the parental. It gives everything and asks nothing, nothing but love, and that is a debt; it is owed to God, and to the brethren, and God calls himself a "Father." The next purest and most unselfish affection is the marital; and God says, "I am married unto you."

These two supreme affections are combined and united in the Church, as they are in the human household. Note the descriptive terms used. Of course, in making a revelation to us, God must employ terms with which we are familiar, and must intend they shall convey to us the meanings and significances they naturally and usually do convey. The Church is called the 'Bride of Christ, and the 'Lamb's Wife,' and the 'Mother of us all,' i.e., of all Christians. Baptism is the 'Birth' of God's 'Child,' being the act by which the Holy Spirit introduces Him into God's family. Confirmation is the preparation of the Child for reception to the family table. The Holy Communion is the family table. The Eucharist the children's 'Bread.' The Church Building is the 'Father's House.' Death is the child's 'sleep.' God's acre, as the Christian graveyard came early to be called, is the child's cradle. The 'Resurrection at the last day' is his getting up in the morning. Eternity is the Christian's to-morrow which really comes. And all the blessings and promises to those born of the 'New Birth' are 'inherited.' One does not get them by buying or earning. 'And if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.' So with all these terms of endearment and loving relations and household privileges, established in the Church, God continues to challenge the love of man and fasten it upon Himself.

And this magnificent exhibition of the love of God from age, is intensified to the human mind by reflection upon the consideration everywhere addressed to the reader or hearer of God's Word, that the Christian fellowship is a membership in the *Royal Family* of the Kingdom of God. It implies nothing less than the title to a Heavenly throne. Nowhere is the child of the New Birth of water and of the Spirit spoken of as a common person, even when among the principalities and powers of the eternal kingdom. As the Child of God, he is the heir of all the worlds, and has his place prepared for him upon the throne of God, high above all angels. Even the guardian angel set to tend upon the little child in the covenant is one of the celestial nobility, who goes in and out of the Palace above, and 'always beholds the Face of the Father in heaven.' The Christian is even now a 'king,' and shall hereafter 'reign with Christ,' and sit with Him on His throne, and 'judge angels,' and all this forever and ever, with God's own eternity, inasmuch as he is a 'Partaker of the Divine Nature,' as St. Peter teaches. And so the Church is the Royal Family and the Heavenly Hierarchy, established upon earth.

Thus the Church exhibits, by God's appointment, the love of God upon earth. She represents the one Christ; exemplifies His one life; tells the one Truth as He told it, by its constitution, its acts and its words, and with perfect clearness. 'If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for the battle?' The Apostle describes the situation in Ephesians, and urges the resulting duties upon Christians, with inspired earnestness. 'For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.' And he proceeds: 'I therefore . . . beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called . . . Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one Body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.'

This picture, one readily sees, is one of unity and order. Indeed into this kingdom, His family upon earth (for every family is a kingdom), God transplanted the order and authority of His kingdom above, and so its harmony and peace. The Apostle continues the description: 'And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even 'Christ.' So there was one organization, covering all lands, with one authority, God's own authority, publicly and specifically indicated, with one habit of life, 'with one mouth, speaking one thing.'