

# The Church Guardian

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## CALENDAR FOR AUGUST.

- Aug. 6—10th Sunday after Trinity.  
*The Transfiguration.*  
“ 13—11th Sunday after Trinity.  
“ 20—12th Sunday after Trinity.  
[*Notice of St. Bartholomew.*]  
“ 24—St. BARTHOLOMEW.  
“ 27—13th Sunday after Trinity.

## 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.)

### THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

“*The promises of God.*”—Gal. 21.

1.—The Epistle to the Galatians deals with the primary and elementary doctrine of justification. It answers the question of Job, “How can a man be justified with God?” Job. xxv. 4. It touches upon the first principles of Christianity. This was also the subject of the Apostle's first Missionary sermon at the Pisidian Antioch. [Acts xiii. 38-39], where there is no uncertainty or hesitation in the Apostle's statement, with regard to the question at issue between himself and the Judaizing teachers, who sought to curtail the liberty of those who had been baptized into the Christian Faith. Were the Gentiles to be circumcised or not at their *admission* to the Church? Was circumcision to be enforced upon them as *necessary* to salvation? Were the legal ordinances of the old covenant binding upon the followers of Christ? These were the points to be solved. For they met the Apostle, they met the Christian evangelist, even at the Baptismal font, and these questions must be settled before baptism could

be administered, or a Gentile convert be received into the Church of Christ.

II.—Addressing himself to this great question, the Apostle leads the Galatian converts, who had passed under the noxious influence of those who constrained them to submit to the requirements of the old ritual, to consider the case of the great progenitor of the Jewish people. Were not the promises of God made to Abraham long before the law was given? and was it not the faith of the Patriarch in those promises that procured him acceptance with God? It is this same faith which saves, and which distinguishes all the spiritual children of Abraham, “The Father of the Faithful.” To be under the law of Moses was to be under the curse: a curse from which Christ alone by his death has relieved us. Ch. iii. 1-18. The law was never intended to give life, but to reveal the imperfections of man, and the depths of his depravity, and thus point him to one who should bestow upon him power to overcome his imperfections and rise from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. The function of the law ceased when Christ came. The contest was between a legal justification—a being made perfect in the flesh—Ch. ii. 16: and acceptance with God through faith in Christ.

III.—The promise that the Gentiles, as well as the Jews should be accepted by God, through faith in Christ was made before the law was given—four hundred and fifty years before—and nothing done on Sinai could effect the solemn covenant, entered into between Jehovah and his faithful servant, in the plains of Mamre. The divine word was pledged in the first covenant to the seed of Abraham that is Christ, that in him, that is, by faith in him, the blessing of justification, which Abraham had received—it was counted to him for righteousness—should be conveyed and dispensed to all nations. “The blessing of Abraham,” Gen. xxviii. 4, was to come upon the Gentiles, and through the righteousness of one man (Jesus Christ) the free gift should come upon all men unto justification of life. Rom. v. 18. It thus follows that the Law could not do away with the solemn compact confirmed before of God in Christ, so as to make the promise of justification by faith of none effect. The Law was ordained long after that covenant, between different parties, and had a different scope and principle.

IV.—Life was indeed mentioned as the reward of sinless obedience to the precepts of the Law; but this was done in order to convince men of their inability to obtain that reward by their own merits or power, and so to flee for refuge to the glorious and abundant hope set before them in the Gospel. The importance of this question of Justification by Faith alone cannot be too plainly insisted upon even in our own day. We may not be able to enter into the difficulty which the Jews felt in admitting the temporary character of the Mosaic dispensation. But our danger lies: 1. In trusting in any merits of our own as a ground of justification in the sight of God. The poison of self-righteousness is very penetrating and is common to human nature. The most earnest Christians have been troubled with it. It works in those who think themselves most free from its influence. 2. In self-complacency on account of our doctrinal position: accuracy of theological knowledge, or careful observance of the precepts of the Church. 3. In a too ready compliance with the spirit of the world, which would separate us from the supernatural, and elevate man, his genius, his knowledge, his power over material things, at the expense of God and the honor due to him by whom we do, and say, and think, and have and are. 4. A forgetfulness of the Divine Presence, which Presence is not an idea of the poets, or as a cold philosophical expression, but a sublime

and soul-inspiring fact. “The just shall live by faith,” walk, talk, think, act, in a word—live in that presence, as Abraham lived in the presence of and conversed with Jehovah. To be busy for God is not necessarily to have faith in God. A fussy activity in Church work is not always the same as living “by faith.” What we need to fix in mind is that all our spiritual life, hopes of pardon, energy in doing or suffering for God, power of real fruitfulness in effect, and strength in conflict with evil, are divided from that first covenant which was confirmed of God in Christ, when the Gospel was preached to Abraham. “Having nothing and yet possessing all things,” would then exactly describe our case.

## THE GENERAL SYNOD.

There would now seem to be no doubt that the meeting called for September next in Toronto for the formation of this august assembly of the Church of England in Canada, will now take place. The various dioceses of the two Ecclesiastical Provinces—with the exception of one or two of the more distant and isolated in the Province of Rupert's Land—have appointed delegates to attend the meeting in accordance with the scale of representation proposed by the Winnipeg Conference, and approved by both Provincial Synods. A full list of these we hope to be able to give in our next number. The Provincial Synod of Rupert's Land has confirmed the addition to its Constitution providing for such General Synod, and the way now appears clear for the coming together, at least, of the Bishops and representatives, Clerical and Lay. When assembled, we trust that there will be little delay in bringing the General Assembly into actual existence. We have been favoured with a copy of *The Mail* containing an able letter from the Lord Bishop of Niagara, in which many of the objections urged by his Lordship and others at the last meeting of the Synod of the Province of Canada to the formation of a General Synod at all, are restated; and delay in organizing is suggested. That there are difficulties in the way and that fears are entertained by some, possibly many, of a conflict of jurisdiction between the *General* and the *Provincial* Synods, is, we believe, too true; but we would respectfully submit that it is now too late to urge these; the scheme has advanced to a stage beyond this. It must not be forgotten in this connection that both Provinces had in effect, even before the Winnipeg Conference met, affirmed as a principle the desirability, if not necessity, of forming a General Synod. The Winnipeg Conference laid this down as a preliminary and fundamental principle, and appointed the time, the place, and the manner of creating this Body. The Provincial Synods approved of this, and by their action, if it means anything, have determined that now is the time to form this superior Council of the Church, and, in so doing, have decided against postponement; and that, too, at least in so far as the Province of Canada is concerned (and of which Niagara Diocese forms part), after a conference between both Houses, and after hearing and discussing to some extent the objections and fears referred to by the Bishop of Niagara in his letter to *The Mail*. The several dioceses have since approved of the Provincial Synod's action, and have appointed

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