

The Church Guardian

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CALENDAR FOR OCTOBER.

Oct. 7th—19th Sunday after Trinity.

" 14th—20th Sunday after Trinity.

[Notice of St. Luke]

" 18th—St. Luke. *Evangelist.*

" 21st—21st Sunday after Trinity.

" 28th—22nd Sunday after Trinity.

St. Simon and St. Jude. A & M.
Athanasi'n Creed. (Notice of
All Saints.

PAROCHIAL MISSIONS.

REV. GEO. R. VAN DE WATER, D.D.

(From the Church Review for October.)

Every clergyman asks himself the question sooner or later in his ministerial work. "What can be done to supplement the ordinary ministrations, and reach two classes of persons—those who need quickening in their spiritual lives, and those who have never been awakened to newness of life in Christ Jesus?" He knows full well that there are men and women whom he meets daily, to whom he preaches constantly, who for years have remained as indifferent to the demands of the Gospel as though they lived in heathen lands, and were beyond the reach of Gospel ministrations. It is useless to praise the merits of the Prayer Book, or discourse eloquently upon the advantages and beauty of a liturgical service, or assert the superiority of the Church over other religious systems; the truth forces itself upon one that notwithstanding all these things, these people are uninfluenced in either the direction of holy living, or devotion to Christian work.

The other class of which we speak—those living in open sin, or if not this, actually opposing the Gospel by their indifference and unconcern, seem to demand something other than the regular methods and ministrations to awaken them out of their sleep, and force upon them the conviction that life in Christ is the only life eternal. Both classes therefore demand something extraordinary to reach and influence them. Thinking of these things, the clergyman who is as earnest as he is devout, will continue to search for some agency, which can be

utilised to the well being of these two classes of individuals. He will never be satisfied to say, if all that is being done fails to influence certain persons, they must remain in their sins. The meaning of "compel them to come in" will be appreciated, and besides ringing the bell and ministering to those who come to church of their own free will and accord, he will seek to inaugurate methods of work that will force the listless out of their listlessness, and make sinners see the error of their ways.

The Parochial Mission is such an agency in Church life and work. It seeks merely to reach those who are not influenced by the regular ministrations. It assumes, what everybody knows to be true, that the best things become common by frequent repetition; that the thunder shower clears the atmosphere, where the ordinary storm cannot do it so well.

The objection that anything novel in the way of spiritual work is to be feared because likely to be erroneous, can apply only to doctrine. If anything other than the old Gospel be preached, blessings cannot follow such preaching. But no such objection can for a moment be urged against the adaption of the Gospel to special needs, unusual surroundings, extraordinary emergencies.

The common sense that will allow a rubric to be overlooked, or even a canon to lose for the moment its binding force, when the occasion demands the breach in observance, is the common sense that will not oppose the few changes in service, and the unusual observances incident to a properly conducted mission. The thing is here, has been here as a latent force some time, is now beginning to be utilized for the welfare of the Church, the good of man, and the greater glory of God. Stripped of all its methods and means, in themselves of small importance, and changeable in nature, the Parochial Mission is merely a united effort on the part of priest and people to supply the need of those about them with the riches of Christ Jesus.

The preparation for the Mission by prayer, private and public, by extensive advertising of services and distribution of appropriate literature, by appeals from the pulpit and the press to the careless and Godless to attend the services and meetings, by house to house visitation, and any other approved methods looking to the end aimed at, is in itself a blessing to any parish. Before the Mission begins, an awakening has taken place, the revival is evident. During the progress of the services, the hospitality shown to strangers by the regular parishioners, attendance of those who do not ordinarily attend a place of worship; serious interest taken in holy things by professors and an evident concern felt by those who hitherto have passed holy things by on the other side, the children feeling that in any manifestation of God's favor on a parish, they share with others the providential goodness, saying prayers together in behalf of those who seek the prayers of the faithful for their own or others needs, the hearty singing of easy and worshipful hymns, the earnest preaching of simple truths in simple style, the conversational after-talk which aims to press home to the hearts of the hearers the truths that have been dwelt upon at length in the sermon—all these things increase the earnestness and zeal of the faithful, and bring the hitherto Godless and unconcerned to a condition of mind that the Holy Spirit can operate on them with success.

The after-work of a Mission is no less fruitful in good results.

The simple device of cards distributed through the pews on the last few evenings of a Mission will secure to the Rector a large number of names and addresses of men and women who are willing to testify that the Mission has been a conscious blessing to them, and to promise that henceforth they will become soldiers of Christ, or else be better soldiers than ever they have been before.

Then, the distribution of these names among the several organisations of the parish, looking after the special needs of each, until as it were all have been brought to the Altar, and there receive the grace that enables them to do all such good works as God has prepared for them to walk in, this work will go far to give life to a parish and make it plentiful in good deeds.

Never has there been held a Parochial Mission that has had thorough preparation, and been properly conducted by one who loved his Church enough to conform to her ways wherever this could be done, but the results have been satisfactory.

The Mission has been abused by men who thought it would work miracles, who dreamed that in a week the Mission would do what they had failed to do in years, who looked to it as a last resort to float both the parish and themselves into a sea of unwonted prosperity.

The Mission has always been approved by those who went about their work in a spirit of consecration and prayer, and all through the services showed a loyalty to the Church so consistent with a quiet earnestness to do all things possible for the extension of the Redeemer's Kingdom. I personally have found it difficult to exercise patience toward the bearing of those who think they have done their whole duty when they have rendered stated services, and preached the Gospel to those who voluntarily have come to Church.

There is too much self-pleasing in this attitude to suit one who believes there are souls all about us, who, unless we get at them and save them, will be lost.

When the Saviour said "Go out," "Compel them to come in," it is not difficult to imagine some unbelievers in Mission methods saying, "Oh, if they won't come in, let them stay out."

Had they spoken their minds, it is even less difficult to imagine the Saviour of men rebuking them in words something like these:

"There will be some among them who will go into the Kingdom before you, and some among you will be cast out."

DEFINITIONS AND UNHAPPY DIVISIONS.

Much has been said and written lately on the reticence of the Bishops assembled at Lambeth in conference respecting "our unhappy divisions on the subject of the Holy Sacrament." To our minds, the reticence of the Conference was a most happy circumstance, not merely because any attempt to introduce any fixed settlement would have produced still greater divisions, (and certainly any mention of the subject, any attempt to enforce greater uniformity of opinion without such fixed settlement would have been unwise); but also because we do think such settlement in every sense undesirable and impossible, because it has never yet been attained, nor is it an attainment to be desired. Our reasons for thus thinking are these: The Church Catechism, as at present rendered, as well as the Service of the Holy Communion, seems to us to be as clear and definite upon the subject as it is possible to be without presumption. Socrates Scholasticus, writing in the year A.D. 439, speaks always of the "sacred mysteries" when he speaks of the Sacrament, and the whole tone of the writers of the primitive Church is so far apart from modern attempts to define what is undefinable, that the result is sometimes very painful to those who have been accustomed to receive the Sacrament as a spiritual mystery, an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. Have not all schisms, heresies, and falling away from the faith arisen chiefly from the attempt to define too much. It began in the Apostolic age, for St. John had to denounce it. St. Paul had