

# The Church Guardian

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## SPECIAL NOTICE.

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## CALENDAR FOR JUNE.

- JUNE 7—First Sunday after Trinity.  
" 11—ST. BARNABAS. Ap & M.  
" 14—Second Sunday after Trinity.  
" 21—Third Sunday after Trinity.  
" 24—ST. JOHN BAPTIST.  
" 28—Fourth Sunday after Trinity.  
" 29—ST. PETER. Ap & M.

## The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

The true doctrine of the Trinity is of the highest importance. It meets the positions of the Agnostic, that God is "unknowable and unthinkable," because it gives the twofold source of knowledge of the Father, in the Son and in the Holy Spirit. The former reveals the Father, "whom no man hath seen or can see." The latter aids the power of man to conceive of the Divine nature, by raising the earthly mind and soul into the plane of Divine things. The stumbling-block of many minds in regard to this doctrine lies in the conception of the perfect unity of the three Persons. The drift of error is first towards Tritheism, and next towards denial of the Divinity of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. This is because the idea of personality is founded on human conceptions, in which inequality and finitude play a necessary part. The reason why each one is himself is that he is not another, because of excess or else of defect. But where the qualities are absolute and infinite, each is equal to each. Take knowledge, for example. The knowledge of no two human persons matches exactly. But if A knows literally everything, and B knows the same, their knowledge is not two, but one. So of truth. Relative truth, which is all human minds can hold, varies with the receptive powers of each man; absolute truth, in the beings capable of it, cannot vary. It ceases to be absolute if it does. On the other hand, the doctrine of the Personality of the ever-blessed Three in One is necessary to avoid the error of Sabellianism, which tends towards Pantheism. This last is the destruction of true worship, which is the approach towards the "Unknowable" through the Revealer and the Inspirer. In the Son, man knows of the Father. By the Holy Ghost, the Indweller, he is able to draw near to the Son.

Again, the doctrine of the Trinity is needed in order to read the Holy Scripture rightly. That is a history of the revelation, as it is a revelation by history, of the threefold dispensations in which God is made known—first as Power, next as Law, and lastly as Love. Without these three notes,

the Bible becomes a riddle of conflicting statements. With them it falls into the most wonderful work of order and symmetry that is known to man.

The Scripture proof of the Trinity is to be made not by scattered texts, but because it is the only doctrine capable of reconciling all by all texts. The Unitarian can bring up a long array of passages to prove the Divine Unity, but he must take them one by one. He cannot possibly reconcile the conflicts of Scripture without rejecting as spurious page after page. Most of all, he can never meet the dilemma that Jesus was justly put to death in. He was only a Judæan peasant. He was put to death for claiming equality with God. The Jews believed Him to have made that claim. He allowed them to believe it. He persuaded His disciples to believe it. If it was not a true claim, he was guilty of at least failing to disavow that which his words more than implied. As a man, His highest, most manifest duty was to prevent any such misconception. His moral purity as a Teacher can only be vindicated by holding Him to have been the victim of a delusion. But the passages on which His claim rests are not to be taken apart from Scripture; they are interwoven into the very web of it. The New Testament is not merely expurgated, but destroyed, if the proofs of Christ's Divinity be eliminated. With the admission of His Divinity, the doctrine of the Trinity is an irresistible consequence. It is not a matter of opinion; it is a *fact*, on which all other cardinal facts of Revelation rest. He is wise who accepts it as a fact, and by its aid finds the pages of Revelation made plain. It was the faith of the Apostles and Evangelists, and they did not (as some hold) put it in a hesitating, doubtful way, into what they wrote, but wrote what they did under the pressure of absolute and clear conviction.

Let us hold fast to this precious faith which was once for all delivered to the saints, as our surest safeguard against the varied assaults of heresy and unbelief.

## Parish Life.

The reports which reach us from time to time indicate that the parishes of our several Canadian dioceses are generally prosperous, many of them conspicuously so, increasing, year by year, in influence and numbers; and if one were content with the evidences of partial and sporadic life, if there were not something almost startling in a condition of things which presents before us the picture of a diocese strong and vigorous on one side, but comparatively weak and helpless on the other, there is very much in the present condition of our parishes to afford satisfaction and encouragement. But when we speak of strong and vigorous life, we do not mean the life of a limb, or a ruddy glow upon the face, or an eye that sparkles with attractive but unnatural lustre. We mean a sympathetic force that works its way through vein and artery and nerve, bearing life with it, and compelling life onward to portions naturally weak, so that when some one part yields for a time, physicians often say, "Let alone; nature will work her cure." In like manner, the spiritual life of the Church should flow from the strong to the weak and from the weak to the strong in reciprocal currents, one life pervading all; one common interest dominating all; one bond of sympathy uniting all. Parochialism, the subdivision of labor

in a common cause, is necessary and wise; it is the multiplication of power, the natural and normal outgrowth and development of the Catholic system; but congregationalism which simulates it under a nominal headship, is wholly sectarian and uncatholic; a fungus, not an outgrowth; a parasite, not a development. With it there can be no oneness of life, no reciprocity of benediction, no common enthusiasm in common cause: only selfishness, ministerial and parochial; caste in the ministry, unnatural distinctions in the body, and finally disintegration. Congregationalism in the Church is the open secret of many failures.

The work and scope of the parish is distinctly marked, so is that of the diocese, and yet, because thus distinctly marked, they are not to be thought of as representing separate interests, but one interest confided to separate custodies, for its better nurture and preservation. As the parish priest is responsible for his own share of this common trust, so is the bishop responsible for certain interests which belong to him especially to care for, and yet are interests of the entire body; and as the priest of the parish cannot execute his share of the common trust unless the people of his charge feel with him, encourage him, hold up his hands, and supply him with the means to discharge his onerous responsibility, so neither can the bishop fulfil his, unless the clergy of the diocese do for him what those clergy call upon their own people to do for them. In a purely congregational system, the minister who builds up his own especial charge does all that is required of him. But the Church demands much more of her clergy, and the priest, in fulfilling his duty to the diocese, justifies to that extent his claims as a Catholic Churchman, and shows himself loyal to his vows. While another who, in this regard, sets his own people an example of delinquency, must remember, should they be disposed at any time to follow it, as they sometimes are, to his own discomfiture, that the bitter herb he feeds on is from seed of his own sowing, and in his own garden-plot.

## Systematic Teaching in Sunday Schools.

The Church must not neglect any one opportunity of teaching the truth in her day-schools, night-schools, and Sunday-schools, and by lectures, catechising, and all other modes of instruction. The arrogant and inaccurate statements made by lecturers who go round in the interest of Disestablishment are not without some effect upon people who are more willing to listen to declamation than to reflect or to inquire into the accuracy of any boldly told assertion, and the errors thus promulgated ought to be much more than met by simple but interesting utterances of truth. A very great opportunity for good in this way exists, but is still scarcely used as it might be, in our Sunday-schools.

Sunday-schools can by no means make amends for the fearful loss to Christianity which will increasingly ensue as the demand for results in secular teaching enlarges to such an extent as to leave small space for any religious instruction at any time, and especially during the weeks just preceding inspection. Few now deny that religious instruction is being pressed out of our day-schools gradually but surely. But while there should be no blinding of the eyes to the lamentable truth that the day-school is rapidly becoming little more than a secular school, and also to the fact that no