

The Church Guardian

— : EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR : —

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CALENDAR FOR JUNE.

- JUNE 4—1st Sunday after Trinity.
 " 11—2nd Sunday after Trinity. ST. BAR-
 NABAS.
 " 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.)

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

"The glorious liberty of the Sons of God."
 —Rom. viii, 21.

1. The afflictions and sufferings of Christian people were a stumbling block to many who embraced the Faith in the infancy of the Church. In an age of martyrdoms, when the baptised were exposed on every hand to peril and shame and loss, it was necessary to keep continually before the minds of the faithful the fact that here they had "no continuing city," but must look beyond the pains and privations of this present time to the "glorious liberty" hereafter to be revealed. "I reckon—I have added up," the Apostle said, the items of suffering on the one side of the account, and the grace and glory on the other; and having made the calculation, I now strike the balance, and declare the result. On St. Paul's special qualifications for making this estimate, see 2

Cor. xii, 4. The period of suffering is only a "season," *i.e.*, short and transitory, to be followed by an eternity of glory, a never ending life of "glorious liberty" from sorrow, and suffering and death.

II. For the manifestation of this deliverance the whole race of mankind waits with earnest longing. The family is now subject to weakness (Ps. xxxix, 6, ep., Ps. cxliv, 4), to corruption, to sorrow and death. To this condition it was brought, not of its own will, but through Adam's Fall: "by reason of him who hath subjected the same." But man does not acquiesce in his "low estate." He has ever "groaned" under a sense of the imperfections and limitations of this present life. Under the tyranny and bondage of evil habit, the soul never ceases to protest against the dominion of Satan. In every age strenuous souls have striven, in the darkness, to find out God and become one with Him. The thickest clouds of heathenism have been pierced with dim hopes of "a glorious liberty," an immortality free from the sins and sorrows of this mortal condition. These have often been vain struggles, and poor, weak visions, of mere unenlightened reason, yet they suffice to show that the race has never ceased to hope for freedom or to aspire to perfection.

III. The Apostle draws attention to the great minor chord—the strain of perpetual sadness—which runs through the world's anthem of praise and adoration, which is ever going up to the Father of Mercies. The Fall entailed a curse upon "the earth and all that is therein." The ground, the animal creation, are mysterious sharers in our heritage of suffering. Weeds and thorns deform the fair face of nature, earthquakes and hidden forces, buried in its bosom, rend and blast it, floods desolate it, and at the last, fire shall consume it entirely, (2 Peter iii, 10.) On all sides of us we see in God's visible creation traces of that original beauty and completeness in which it was fashioned. Marred and spoiled, it seems to the eye of faith to be ever appealing for restoration, and to reproach man for thus entailing upon it the effects of his own "lawlessness."

IV. But, as the Apostle again suggests in another phrase, these things are for a "season" only. The period of "glorious liberty" is to follow. And by the use of one word the Apostle gives us a picture, vivid and radiant, of the great consummation of the Christian's Hope. Here Christians have the "first fruits of the Spirit." The "full harvest" is to come. For a season they are to bear about them a body of corruption, they are to endure trial, they are to be wearied by the return of thoughts and tendencies, and desires, which they abhor, and which sadden the mind even when checked and overcome. Death has to be met—the dissolution of soul and body which must ever be full of awe to the living. Then shall come the deliverance, "this mortal shall put on immortality," and the faithful one shall realize "the glorious liberty of the Sons of God," to wit, "the redemption of the body." The glimpse of a future life, which cheered the heathen, was but at best a dream of the spirit's immortality. The Resurrection of the body, and man's complete deliverance from physical sorrow and death, implies the full restoration of our manhood as it left the Divine Hand on the morning of Creation, in all its first purity, glory, and complete oneness with the Divine Purpose and Will. This is the glorious spring-time to which the Christian is exhorted to look forward. As nature reveals the glory of her foliage, and the graces of form and colour when the winter is past; as the sun comes forth in his splendour, after having been veiled awhile by the clouds, so shall the righteous shine forth, and the sons of God be revealed in the day in which our "glorious liberty," forfeited in Adam, is restored to us in Christ.

HYMNS AND HYMN WRITERS.

BY

REV. CANON BRIGSTOCKE, D.D., RECTOR OF TRINITY CHURCH, ST. JOHN, N.B.

(Continued.)

VI.

A year later than John Keble, in 1793, was born a poet, whose Evening hymn has, perhaps, surpassed his; Henry Francis Lyte, the author of "Abide with me, fast falls the eventide." His health was weak, and he had often to travel abroad. In September, 1847, he returned home, weak and ill, and to the surprise of his family would preach once more. His sermon was a touching one on the Holy Communion, and was listened to with almost breathless attention, as from a dying man. In the evening of the same day, he placed in the hand of a near relative that beautiful hymn, which has justly become a favorite with all who know it. Soon afterwards he was taken to the south of Europe, and died at Nice, where he was buried.

Of these later days, perhaps, no hymns have obtained a wider acceptance than those of Charlotte Elliott. For some years she lived a quiet and devoted life at Torquay, where she wrote many of her hymns in an arbour overlooking the beautiful bay. She had much practical sympathy with those in sorrow and suffering, and hence her hymns have given much comfort. We are indebted to her for the well-known hymn:

"My God and (not 'my') Father, while I stray,"

Also:

"Just as I am, without one plea,
 But that Thy blood was shed for me."

And that one of considerable power and beauty:

"Christian, seek not yet repose;
 Hear Thy guardian angel say."

Another hymn-writer to whom we owe much, and who alas! went out from us, some forty years ago, is Frederick William Faber. Some of his hymns are spoiled by sentimentalism, but others are good and noble. The two which have caught the popular ear, namely,

"O Paradise, O Paradise."

And—

"Hark, hark, my soul! Angolic songs are swelling,"

are by no means his best. Of the last mentioned, Bishop Alexander quaintly writes, that it combines every conceivable violation of every conceivable beauty." Whatever are its faults, it somehow finds its way to the hearts of Christian people. Another favorite by Faber is:

"Sweet Saviour, bless us ere we go,"

and that most solemn hymn for Good Friday:

"O come, and mourn with me a while."

To John Mason Neale, whose influence as a hymn writer, has probably been greater than any other poet in England in this country, we are indebted for many well-known and beautiful hymns. Of these we mention:

"My God, how wonderful Thou art,
 &c., &c., &c."

"Christ is gone up: yet ere He passed,"
 &c., &c., &c."

"Draw nigh, and take the Body of the Lord,"
 &c., &c., &c."

"Light's abode, celestial Salem,"
 &c., &c., &c."

"To the Name that brings salvation,"

and the delightful evening hymn:

"The day, O Lord, is spent,
 Abide with us, and rest."

Neale was the son of a clergyman, and grad-