

# The Church Guardian

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## CALENDAR FOR JULY.

JULY 7th—3rd Sunday after Trinity.

" 14th—4th Sunday after Trinity.

" 21st—5th Sunday after Trinity. (*Notice of St. James.*)

" 25th—ST. JAMES. A. & M. (*Athanasian Creed.*)

" 28th—6th Sunday after Trinity.

## THE TRINITY.

"In the word 'Trinity,'" says Bishop Coxe, "the Church simply sums up what is revealed concerning God—that in substance He is one, but, in persons, three. In this there is nothing contradictory, for is it not asserted that He is *three* in the same sense in which He is *one*. But yet it is something mysterious; for we know not how this unity of substance consists with the Trinity of persons. Nor do we know anything of God which He has not told us; nor is there anything told us of God which is not mysterious."

How can it be otherwise? We are rocked upon a sea of mystery—infinite. Earth and air and sea are full of wonders past our finding out. "The wind bloweth where it listeth," and we cannot tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth. Concerning ourselves we know that we are "made in the image of God." *Somehow* we know that it is so, but *how* we know not. *Somehow* we know that we have in us a divine nature, a soul that will not perish, but will live forever. We know also that in this we differ from all else breathing the breath of life which God hath created on this earth; but never yet have we fathomed the mystery of that soul! What, then? Shall we believe only what we understand? Will any man assert such a thing as that? And if we understand not our own nature, yet believe in its trinity of body, soul and spirit, how shall we refuse the word of God because, like Nicodemus, we are astonished at the saying, and know not how these things can be?

That the Bible does teach the doctrine of the Trinity may be abundantly proven. In the beginning, we are told in the book of Genesis, God said, "Let us make man in our own

image." And again, at the dispersion at the Tower of Babel, "Let us go down and confound their language"—words spoken not in the royal style as has been surmised—for this mode of speech is of comparatively modern origin, not used by Saul or David or Solomon, by the Kings of Homer, or in any ancient writings; words not addressed to the Angels, as has again been supposed, for we are expressly told that man was not made in the image of the Angels, and further, from the very structure of the sentences an equality of rank is distinctly assumed between the speaker and those whom he is addressing. The only adequate alternative, says Canon Liddon, to that interpretation of these texts which is furnished by the Trinitarian doctrine, is the violent assumption of some kind of Pro-Mosaic Olympus, the many deities of which are upon a level of strict equality with the others.

Turning to the New Testament we find that St. John's Gospel opens thus: "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. All things were made by Him and without him was not anything made that was made."

We read also that in the beginning, when God made the Heaven and the Earth, the spirit of God brooded over the face of the waters. Here then in the work of Creation we have a distinct recognition of the three persons of the Adorable Trinity.

The third chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel gives an account of the baptism of Jesus—when the heavens were opened unto Him and He saw the spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon Him, and lo! a voice from heaven saying: "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased." Clearly a manifestation again of the three persons of the God-head.

Finally the formula itself is plainly set forth in our Saviour's parting instructions to the chosen twelve—"Go ye therefore and teach—rather, make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

The Jews, says Bishop Wordsworth, baptized proselytes into the Name of One God. This One God is revealed to Christians in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Ghost. The Apostolic number twelve is formed of three multiplied with four. *Three* is the number of persons in the Trinity. *Four* is the symbol of all space. (North, South, East, West) The Apostolic Church is commissioned to baptize *all* into One Faith. Not *in*, but *into the Name*; and not *Names* (plural) but *into the One Name*; i. e., admit them by the sacrament of Baptism into the privileges and duties of Faith in and Obedience to, the Name of the One God in three persons. The Father, and the Son and the Holy Ghost, and into participation of and communion with the *Divine Nature*. In both the Hebrew and Greek scriptures God's *Name* has a comprehensive meaning. It signifies whatever belongs to God,—His Essence, Attributes, House, Word, &c. "Christ" says Athanasius "has founded his Church in the belief in the Holy Trinity." Indeed, continues Bishop Wordsworth; this Baptismal formula is a declaration from Christ that His religion is grounded on a profession of, Belief in, and Obedience to, One God, in *three Divine Persons*, Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

In the name of the Holy Trinity then are we baptized into the body of Christ, and in the same blessed name do we worship and glorify God day after day. That it is a mystery we do not deny; and we do not presume to explain any more that we try to account for a thousand wonderful things which we understand not, yet unquestionably believe. It is a mystery, but it is not the only mystery,—only the most profound of all; and it cannot be less, seeing that

it involves the knowledge of the Divine Mystery,—the Lord of Heaven and earth,—the Maker of all things, visible and invisible!

## THE NATIONAL CHURCH AND THE NATION.

An Address given to Axbridge Deanery Clerical and Lay Conference by the Rev. Henry George Tomkins

Brethren, we have a 'goodly heritage,' and a 'high calling of God in Christ Jesus.' We stand between 'our fathers' and the 'old time before them' on the other hand, and 'all generations' that will follow us on the other. Whatever we may think of any self-constituted society, our own place and work are altogether a different matter. I want to remind you that our Church is the kingdom of God in our nation in its higher aspect and effort, it is 'the state of Christ's Church militant here,' in England, and throughout our empire round the world. Within the last four or five years it is true that very valuable work has been done in the way of opening the eyes of our people, in general, to the broad and solid truth as to Church history, and its bearings on our own welfare and duty. Still, it is hard to realize the destructive effects of sophistry, and that worst kind of ignorance which is bred by neglect of sound teaching on the one hand, and a swarming circulation of false information on the other.

There are those everywhere, within the Church as well as without, who handle revealed truth as if it were their own stock in trade, and not the property of our Master in heaven. The business compromise and surrender, agreeing to differ and prophesying smooth things, goes on briskly, and the treacherous dealers deal very treacherously as of old, in exact contravention of that sacred saying, 'buy the truth and sell it not.' For instance, religious agencies which indifferently favour all sects, and ignore the Church, are exalted as 'unsectarian.' Those which embrace (if it be possible) all 'denominations' are entitled 'undenominational,' the veriest husk of a 'vain word, that ever deluded the unwary. A divine who will 'agree to differ' with all false doctrine, heresy, and schism is applauded as 'truly catholic-spirited.'

Old, intelligible, and time-honoured terms of definition are now twisted hind before and upside down, out of disaffection to their true meaning. What with the new vocabulary of 'vain words,' and old words that have lost their savour by being taken in vain, it is difficult indeed to convey a positive and honest meaning to this generation.

I confess to a great fear that 'the faithful are diminished from among the children of men;' but we must remember that our lot is cast in one of those great times when the earth is shaken terribly, 'that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.' The nation that is founded and built up on 'those things' will remain, and it is our part and duty to strengthen 'those things' amongst our own people to the ends of the earth and to all generations. That is precisely the old commandment which our Lord gave to His Church with the promise of His presence. 'All things whatsoever I have commanded you.' We are not to *let go* a jot or title, nor to *add*, in teaching and discipline, in word and sacraments. How, then, can we send the young members of The Church for religious instruction to those who formally dispense with both the Sacraments instituted by Christ our Lord; to those who not only forsake, but would destroy (were it possible) The Church of our nation,