

The Church Guardian

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CALENDAR FOR SEPTEMBER.

- SEPT. 3—14th Sunday after Trinity.
“ 8—Friday. Fast.
“ 10—15th Sunday after Trinity.
“ 15—Friday. Fast.
“ 17—16th Sunday after Trinity. (*Notice of Ember Days and St. Matthew.*)
“ 20—Ember Day. Fast.
“ 21—St. MATTHEW, Ap.
“ 22— } Ember Days Fast.
“ 23— }
“ 24—17th Sunday after Trinity. (*Notice of St. Michael and All Angels.*)
“ 29—St. MICHAEL and All Angels.

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.)

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

“I thank my God always.”—1 Cor. 1: 4.

I.—The Apostle thanks his God always on behalf of the Christians of Corinth. To thank God for spiritual blessings bestowed on others is a sign of true charity, which rejoiceth in the growth of religion and the spread of the Holy Spirit's influence amongst others. Christian Love participates in the joy of others and rejoices with those who do rejoice. Thanksgiving a duty as well as a privilege. It should be offered “always” as a part of every act of worship, inasmuch as the blessing of God is perpetually resting upon his people. The cause of the Apostle's joy was the happy condition of the Church he was addressing *as a body.* Some of its individual members were far from adorning the Gospel of Jesus Christ, but in its general character “the body” in Corinth was in such a

condition as to call forth this expression of the great teacher's affectionate gratitude, and a joyful assurance of its final glory.

II.—In this thanksgiving we may see what the Corinthian Church had and what it lacked. It had great intellectual “gifts,” its members were enriched in all “utterance”—the power to proclaim Christian Truth, and set it forth in various languages; and in all “knowledge”—i.e., an understanding of the mysteries of the Gospel. “Utterance” follows “knowledge”—it is the fruit of mental enlightenment. These talents had been bestowed upon the Corinthian “body” in a generous measure by the Holy Ghost, in order that she might use all the advantages of her position as a teacher of the Gentiles. For all gifts of geographical position, intellect, wealth or political power, the Church has to render thanks to God. These are instruments of usefulness, not to be despised in the great work of winning the world for Christ.

III.—It is a good thing to take note of the condition of the Church as a whole, and not to be lost overmuch in parochialism or the criticism of individual members. Courage, joy, peace, renewed hope comes to us when we survey the greater area, and note how faithfully the Lord keeps His promises to the body. “We are members one of another.” (The point of the Special Thanksgiving Service for the establishment of our General Synod was the recognition of the good hand of our God upon us for good) as a “body” without reference to individual dioceses or parishes. But “graces” are needed as well as “gifts.” These latter are rather outward talents. “Graces” are the inward fruits of the Spirit, without which all outward or material endowments or favours are but “as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.” The greater glory of a Church, her highest “adorning,” are not intellectual or social or splendour of material possessions, or rich endowments, or magnificent fabrics, or an impressive ritual;—these are good; but those inward “graces” of faithfulness to her Lord, and an inward holiness, which is the fruit of a constant waiting for the coming of her Lord: the earnest desire of the bride to be found “without spot or wrinkle or any such thing” at the coming of the Bridegroom to take her to Himself. This inward “grace” of true holiness the Corinthian “body” lacked in a measure, as the Apostles implies by the delicate courtesy of his words. They—the Corinthians—were less rich in stability and purity than in outward “gifts,” and to this fact the Apostle gently draws their attention.

IV.—Moral grace is given to those who live in daily expectation of and preparation for the “day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” This should ever be—and will ever be—the attitude of the sincere believer. “His eyes will ever eastward turn, Looking for the dawn.” Every thought and act and word will be done with reference to that supreme hour in the life of the Church when nature shall proclaim, “Behold the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.” To wait for the coming of our Lord is: I. To look for it. II. To desire it. III. To prepare for it. The danger of the Church is that she may lose herself in the “present” things.

Let us note then: 1. That every gift of God is to be a subject of thankfulness, whether bestowed upon ourselves as individual members of “the body” or upon “the body” collectively and as a whole. II. That “graces” are needed as well as gifts, and that an activity in proclaiming the truth and enlarging the borders of the Church, or a clear perception of theological questions, are to be accompanied by “graces”—inward holiness and personal devotion to Him for whom the world is waiting, and for whose presence the Church is daily praying with all the pathos of the song of Deborah: “Why is

His chariot so long in coming? Why tarry the wheels of His chariots?” (Jud. v. 28.) III. “Blamelessness” in the day of His coming—this is the consuming aspiration of the Christian Church. The sanctification of will, body, soul, life. The “keeping innocency” while we look to Him to confirm us—to strengthen and keep us in the way, by His grace; so that when He is revealed from Heaven our blessedness shall be complete in Him.

The Church Consolidated.

The great work of uniting into one, the twenty different and independent dioceses of The Church of England in Canada under one GENERAL SYNOD has been accomplished: and to-day this Church stands forth before the world a compact thoroughly organized and powerful body: so powerful as to command at once the admiration and respect even of those who differ from her, or take but little interest in general in such matters. This abundantly appears from the editorials of those great dailies of the city of Toronto, the *Empire* and the *Globe*, which we reproduce in another part of this number. Throughout the session a special corps of reporters from these papers, and the *Mail* attended every sitting of the Lower House, and column after column of these ably conducted dailies were filled with an almost *verbatim* reports of the proceedings, for which a hearty vote of thanks was accorded them ere the General Synod closed.

We pointed out in this paper several weeks before the meeting took place, as well the course which would require to be pursued in order to duly form this august body, as the difficulties which stood in the way. Though at first a determination appeared to exist to ignore the necessity of laying a proper basis or foundation before erecting the building itself,—which determination if persisted in would evidently have prevented any Synod being formed,—the mistake was seen and remedied: and thereafter the difficulties were soon removed, and the basis of union, consisting of a Declaration of Faith; two special resolutions or declarations as to existence of Provincial Synods and diocesan rights having been adopted as unchangeable, the Constitution itself, largely on the lines of the Winnipeg Conference Scheme, was considered at length and finally adopted. It was a task of no ordinary difficulty and requiring no small amount of wisdom and of temperate and considerate action. We cannot but feel that throughout the proceedings there was the unmistakable guidance of the Holy Spirit, whose presence had been specially invoked. Indeed there appeared to prevail a sort of inspiration different from anything we have before felt in connection with like gatherings; and the happy result, bringing we feel sure, joy and a deep sense of gratitude to the heart of every true son and daughter of this branch of the one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church—must be attributed to God himself. The one thought in this connection should be NOT UNTO US, O LORD; NOT UNTO US, BUT UNTO THY NAME GIVE THE PRAISE. The event is so important and its effect will be so far reaching that notwithstanding the united act of Thanksgiving in service and Eucharist of Bishops, Clergy and Laity as a Synod,—it might well