

The Church Guardian

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Special Notice.

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CALENDAR FOR SEPTEMBER.

SEPT. 5th—11th Sunday after Trinity.

" 12th—12th Sunday after Trinity.—*Notice of Ember Days.*

" 15th—
" 17th—
" 18th—

EMBER DAYS.

" 19th—13th Sunday after Trinity.—*Notice of St. Matthew.*

" 21st—St. Matthew, A.E. & M.

" 26th—14th Sunday after Trinity.

(*Notice of St. Michael and All Angels.*)

" 29th—St. Michael and All Angels.

PRAYER FOR UNITY.

O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only Saviour, the Prince of Peace, give us grace seriously to lay to heart the great dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions. Take away all hatred and prejudice and whatever else may hinder us from godly union and concord; that, as there is but one Body and one Spirit, and one Hope of our calling! one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of us all, so we may henceforth be all of one heart, and of one soul, united in one holy bond of truth and peace, of faith and charity, and may with one mind and one mouth glorify thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

REASONS FOR FAITH IN CHRIST.

[FROM THE CHURCH RECORD.]

No one else has ever made such demands of men as has Jesus Christ. We are asked to believe in, love and obey Him, to live and die by Him, and face Almighty God at last trusting in Him alone. These are the most amazing requests. Has He any authority for making them? This is the most fundamental of all questions. And unless he can satisfy us about His authority He but trifles with us.

He is both able and willing to satisfy us; nor can any one please Him more than by reverently asking the reasons for faith in Him. And in the answer that He will give to such reverent inquiry lies the basis for the most unfaltering faith. Let us try to indicate a line of argument which makes it altogether reasonable to love, obey and trust Him above all others.

On the surface of the Gospels the most noticeable fact is the miraculous power of

Jesus; but while this can make us wonder and admire, it does not alone constitute a sufficient ground of faith. He was Himself very unwilling to rest His claims upon His mighty works, frequently refusing to perform them as a proof that His mission was divine. His wish seems always to have been this: Believe in Me, in My teaching, character and manner of life, that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me; or else, if your spiritual sense cannot so detect the truth that is in Me, then believe in Me for the very work's sake. Because they knew Him the disciples believed on Him. Their feeling was not mere admiration at display of power, but love, reverence and devotion, called out by His character and manner of life. The mere wonderers and admirers have never become His disciples.

The only sufficient ground of faith is found in Jesus Christ Himself. Tested in whatever way, He proves Himself divine. The more His character is examined, the more complete and exalted it is found to be. Whatever is strong and lovely, all the noble qualities and capacities of the human soul, are infinitely developed in Him. He has the bearing of a God at all times, ready for each occasion and superior to every circumstance. No artful cunning of His enemies, no skillfully concocted scheme, or sudden attack, can surprise Him into any evil act of indiscretion. No impending danger tempts Him to any injurious compromise or temporary expedient, but He always goes calmly and resolutely on in the path of duty. With his enemies gathering malignantly around Him, He does not strive, nor cry, nor falter. Subjected to every evil influence, sifted of Satan as wheat, tortured, and crowned with thorns, and with malice holding its mocking court around Him, crucified with thieves, while bigotry, hatred and scorn rage beneath him, still we behold that unspeakable peace and that unfailing strength, superior to circumstance, victorious over hatred, and triumphant over agony. If He speaks it is but in remembrance of others. Thus His character and action bear examination. Let Time, which somehow finds out all the weak spots in human character, and lowers all other reputations, bring its destructive forces to bear on Him. He stands this test well also. He has more admiring millions to-day than yesterday, animated with a deeper love and a profounder faith. Criticism bends all its cold energies upon Him in vain. Voltaire cannot crush Him; Hume's philosophic scepticism assailing Him but exalts Him, and all minor infidels trying to injure Him but prove how irreproachable is his character and how indestructible are His claims.

There is another satisfactory proof of Christ's authority in the self-evident truth which He taught. His moral and religious instruction only needs examination to convince any one of its absolute perfection. His moral system is so complete and convincing that it is rapidly becoming the ethical standard of the world; it is so powerful that it is gradually transforming human nature and filling the world with love and justice. It is proving its fitness to survive. For it has the same fitness to rule in the moral world that the law of gravity has in the physical world; that is, nothing superior to either can be imagined; nothing that will do its work better. And this is true of all the essential teachings of Jesus; the great soul of the universe speaks in them, just as it does in the laws of nature. It is because of this intrinsic truth and beauty, because of its superiority to everything else of its kind, that the Gospel of Christ has claims upon us. If it is not this then we need not believe it. If there is anything better we have a right to find it; but until we do, the one who can speak and act as He has done has a right to our love and faith.

Jesus has also shown that He has greater power to purify and ennoble human character than any one else. In large degree he saves

His people from their sins. So far as any one follows Him he becomes pure, peaceful, sympathetic, strong and brave. These weaknesses of spirit and infirmities of character, for which there is no human physician, but which impede our course and dwarf every achievement, He somehow cures. He has done this for many trust-worthy millions. No one has ever found Him to fail. He is a great Master over the human heart. Cares, anxieties, troubles, and perplexities carried unto Him, become easy to bear. In sorrow, disappointment, or pain, He bids men be of good cheer. In failure his voice is always encouraging; in our highest successes we can still hear Him suggesting possibilities far beyond our present achievement, and but for Him beyond our thought. He has permanently entered into human life, laws, and customs, into current thought, philosophy, poetry, art and music, influencing and regenerating, if not yet controlling, all. He has already proved that no wrong, evil, or injustice of society can permanently withstand Him. It is this actual and practical power and beauty in Him which make all other religions begin to disappear when His is preached among them, and renders Him a worthy object of universal love and worship.

Moreover Jesus has lived the ideal life. There is something about Him which makes Him a model for all men. If anyone could be a benefactor of his race, he must attain his end as Jesus did, through love, labor and self-denial. Or whoever could be pure, gentle, earnest, faithful and strong, if any one would have a clear mind, a loyal heart, and firm purpose, a beautiful character and a noble life, he must learn of Jesus Christ. In all these things He proves Himself the worthiest object of love, reverence, and imitation. In the last analysis this is our highest reason for trusting Him. He stands upon His merits. We simply point to His teaching, character and practical power over human nature.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

THE large attendance of Clerical and Lay Delegates at the opening service of the Provincial Synod was most gratifying. The service too was on the whole good; but we cannot refrain from expressing unfeigned regret that on such an occasion as this the unconsciousable mistake should have been made of singing the *Nicene Creed*. No matter how beautiful the music we personally dislike this use of the creed at any time; but at a *Synod* service, when the Church, by its representatives, as a whole is present, what more grand, or noble, or impressive act could there be than the *outspoken Confession of faith by each and every member*? Although the setting was Gounod's, exquisite and extremely touching in parts, as every one knows, and though it was fairly rendered the effect was to us painful and eminently unsatisfactory. We cannot bring ourselves to accept the services of the choir as a discharge of the common duty of the congregation in this particular.

We sincerely hope that the sermon of the Lord Bishop of Algoma at the service above referred to may be carefully read by all our subscribers, and may be passed on to others. It was not only eloquent but what is better is a noble outspoken statement of the Church's position on the great question of the day, the uncalled for and sinful divisions of the Body of Christ, and of the means to be adopted for the remedying of the evil, viz.: a return to the old paths and the essential truths.