

THE CHURCH GUARDIAN

—EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR—

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ANNOUNCEMENTS SEE PAGE 13.

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4. The courts have decided that refusing to take newspapers or periodicals from the Post office, or removing and leaving them uncalled for, is *prima facie* evidence of intentional fraud.

CALENDAR FOR MARCH.

March 2nd.—ASH WEDNESDAY.

(The forty days in Lent are to be observed as Days of Fasting or abstinence.—
Ash Wednesday, collect to be used daily.)

" 6th.—1st SUNDAY IN LENT. (Notice of
Ember Days : Ember Coll.
daily.)

" 9th }
" 11th } EMBER DAYS
" 12th }

" 13th.—2nd SUNDAY IN LENT.

" 20th.—3rd SUNDAY IN LENT. (Notice of
The Annunciation.)

" 25th.—THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE BLESS-
ED VIRGIN MARY.

" 27th.—4th SUNDAY IN LENT.

OBSERVANCE OF LENT.

The Lenten season rightly observed purifies the heart from greed and lust, it breaks the force of evil habit, it brings us nearer Christ, and causes a firmer tie union between our soul and Heaven.

Those who brand the keeping of Lent a superstitious and useless custom have—rarely without exception—never paid attention to its observance, and therefore do not know the blessings which come to those who keep it rightly.

Lent is observed by employing such means as will cause self-denial and self-sacrifice, either as God's word as prescribed, or our own reason and experience recommends. Some may find rules to be useful or necessary which to others would be neither. Care should be taken not to censure that which it would be well to imitate. All Christians—especially those who live in ease and luxury—should be attentive to "keep their

bodies in subjection;" not harassing them as enemies, but ruling and providing for them as servants; in such manner as to make them both willing to obey and able to perform their work.

Fondness for pleasure and tendency to follow the customs of the world should be watched, not with unreasonable scrupulousness, but with religious prudence. Favorite inclinations should be suspected and the opinions that countenance them will check themselves as they grow eager.

"His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower."

We are willing to keep at ever so great a distance from the faults to which we have little or no inclinations, but more favorite vices have easy entrance into our hearts and take firm possession of them. We are shocked at the monstrous and ruinous eagerness for pleasure, the profligate and unprecedented contempt of religion that prevails in the world; our behavior on these heads is unblameable, exemplary, and we value ourselves upon it beyond bounds. Yet all the while we indulge ourselves to the full another way; are unjust, selfish and unreasonable, penurious and hard-hearted, censorious or unforgiving, peevish and ill-tempered, and make those about us uneasy, and chiefly those whose happiness ought to be our first care. This is applauding ourselves for being fortified, where the enemy is not likely to make an attack, and leaving the places that are most exposed quite undefended.

Every Christian should study the weak parts of his or her heart and custom. Lent is the time to do it properly. By a truly and religiously kept Lenten season, not only one wrong inclination may be rooted out, but the whole "body of sins" may be destroyed, and with all "its affection and lusts" nailed to the cross of Christ.—*Parish Guide.*

SELF-DENIAL.

The Christian world is not too wise or too good to be made yet wiser and better. Lent opens up a way—brightened by that life crucified on the cross of Calvary—that the goal of wisdom and goodness may be reached through the avenue of self-denial. If we turn ourselves from worldly pleasures and allow our minds to read and hear the word of God for a period of forty days, we cannot but deeply realize that our blessed Lord "gave himself for us, that he might sanctify and cleanse us and present us to Himself holy and without blemish." If we do not labor to become thus, we frustrate in a measure His gracious intentions, and make his sufferings vain. If we crucify not our affections and lusts we "crucify him afresh, and put him to open shame;" pour contempt on his glorious undertaking and expose it to the scorn of others; the consequences of which will be, that as "while we profess to know Him, in works we deny Him," so will he in the day of judgment "profess to us, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

We desire to be glorified with Christ, but often fail to remember that true glory can only be attained in earth or in Heaven through self-denial. "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: whosoever will lose his life shall save it." If that law held good for the sinless Christ, how much more must it hold good for us.

Without self-denial there can be no blessedness. "He that loveth his life shall lose it." "He that hateth his life in this paltry, selfish, luxurious, hypocritical world, shall keep it to life eternal."

Self-denial has not its value with God, as some think, from the measure of pain it causes. This pain is often caused by the remaining reluctance to practice it. It has its highest worth in that meek and even joyful acquiescence which counts nothing a sacrifice for Jesus' sake, and feels surprised when others speak of self-denial.

"We ought not to please ourselves, for even Christ pleased not Himself." What He was, we must be. What He did, we must do. Self-denial is the law of the Christian life. What a glorious life will it be in the Church of Christ when that law prevails—every one considering it the object of existence to make others happy, every one denying himself or herself, seeking not their own self, but esteeming others better. All thought of taking offence, of wounded pride, of being slighted or passed by, would pass away. As followers of Christ every one would seek to bear the weak and to please their neighbor. True self-denial would be seen in this, no one would think of self, but live in and for others. Christ's spirit of self-denying love would be poured upon us and to deny self would be the greatest joy and the means of deepest communion with God. When we part with self, Christ takes the place, and His love and gentleness and kindness flow out to others. To true Christians no command is more blessed or more natural than "we ought not to please ourselves, for even Christ pleased not himself." "If any man come after me, let him deny himself and follow me.—*Selected.*

SELF-SACRIFICE.

The connection between self-sacrifice and self-denial is that the former is the root from which the latter springs. In self-denial, self-sacrifice is tested and thus strengthened and prepared each time again to renew its entire surrender. Christ's incarnation was a self-sacrifice; His life of self-denial was proof of it; though again, He was prepared for the great act of self-sacrifice in His death on the cross. The Christian conversion is a sacrifice of self, though but a very partial one, owing to ignorance and weakness. From that first act of self-surrender arises the obligation to the exercise of daily self-denial. The Christian's efforts to do so, show him his weakness and prepare him for that new and more entire self-surrender in which he first finds strength for more continuous self-denial.

Self-sacrifice is the very essence of true love. The very nature and blessedness of love consists in forgetting self, and seeking its happiness in the loved one. What better time is there to cast aside self, and draw near to God, than during Lent? Is it not a special season to practice the surrender of self, by extraordinary acts of penitence, charity, and religious devotion; by fasting, and abstinence from amusement, and all things that tend to draw away the heart from God?

Without entire self-sacrifice we cannot love as Jesus loved. "Even as I have loved you, love ye also." It is in every word, thought and deed our calling to become exactly like Jesus in His love and self-sacrifice. "Walk in love, even as Christ loved." To hunger and thirst after righteousness, to be good and to do good, is the best and highest sacrifice which any Christian can offer to Heaven. By so doing they honor their Father most truly, for they long and strive to be like Christ. To be good as Christ was good, holy as He was holy, beneficent and useful; being in one word, perfect, is the best and highest act of worship, the truest devotion.—*Selected.*