

# The Church Guardian

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## Special Notice.

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### CALENDAR FOR APRIL.

- APRIL 3rd—6th Sunday in Lent.—(Notice of Days in Holy Week).
- " 4th—MONDAY before Easter.
  - " 5th—TUESDAY before Easter.
  - " 6th—WEDNESDAY before Easter.
  - " 7th—THURSDAY before Easter.
  - " 8th—GOOD FRIDAY. (Pr. Pss.: M. 22, 40, 54. Evg. 67, 88.)
  - " 9th—EASTER EVEN.
  - " 10th—EASTER DAY. (Pr. Pss.: M. 2, 57, 111; E. 113, 114, 118. Pr. Anth. ins. of Venite. Ath. Cr.: Pr. Pref. in Com. Ser., till 17th April instant.
  - " 11th—MONDAY in Easter Week.
  - " 12th—TUESDAY in Easter week.
  - " 17th—1st Sunday after Easter.
  - " 24th—2nd Sunday after Easter.
  - " 25th—St. Mark, Evangelist and Martyr.

### THE CHURCH AND THE MORALS OF THE DAY.

Without any approach to prudery, for which there is no sort of necessity, it must be owned, notwithstanding all that can be said to the contrary, that the condition of morals of the present time is far from satisfactory. It is not difficult indeed to point backwards to days when possibly some things were far worse than they are now, and when language was used 'in Society' which would not be tolerated just at present. On the other hand it may be questioned if 'Agnosticism' and even downright 'Disbelief' was then allowed to assert themselves as they now do; and the results upon the morals of the day are not at all unnatural, though they be frightful and pernicious. But this is not all, and it is not the worst: unbelief has much to answer for; but it appears that gross immoralities are sometimes connected with some of the externals of religion. This is fully admitted; but what causes so strange a phenomenon? What so likely as the prevalence of an idea that, although some attention to things religious is very desirable, there is sufficient uncertainty about the whole matter to render much strictness of life unnecessary? Impurity vaunts itself where it is little suspected, and to an extent that is inflicting much evil on this country. The acknowledged purity of the Court for more than half a century has had much good influence, but the selfishness and lustfulness of the ungoverned affections, even in what is re-

garded as 'high Society,' have broken beyond all bounds, and recent revelations have proven that in the higher ranks of society are found men and women whose *abandon* outstrips and exceeds anything of a similar kind amongst the lower ranks. Amongst the latter it is, alas! too common for young women to be led astray by young men of their own social position, but it is not often that the young women so far puts away every sense of decency as to go forth to the house of another and seek there for the company she may viciously desire. It is a terrible conclusion, but it is too probably a correct conclusion, that the immoralities of some of the higher classes of Society are even worse and lower in their degradation than are the immoralities of any other class. Public attention has of late been much attracted to the frightful scandal, and proofs of degradation amongst those who might have been, and ought to have been, charming, virtuous, bright, and happy, have become during the last few months so numerous and so plain that Society must begin to practise a better code of morals generally, or the results must be fraught with danger to this country. And it may be suspected with too much reason that there be other outrages upon the morals of some of the opulent and of some of those who value long lines of ancestry which, while administering the due reward of sin (as sin ever does), are sad to contemplate. Perhaps this too will 'come out' some day, and at last the immoral will find that after all sin cannot be trifled with as they thought it could be, but that the recompense of a man's work is rendered to him. As regards the injury caused to Society by the publication of the wrongdoings of mankind, it may be confidently affirmed that there are few things worse (except certain novels largely read by ladies, and some of them written by ladies) than the columns of the details of sundry trials and scenes in a Law Court which young ladies read freely, and, it may be feared, comment upon with other young ladies very perniciously.

The whole tone of Society has greatly altered for the worse, of late years, as regards Christianity and the Church, and the results are beginning to show themselves. How is the Lord's Day used now by myriads, and amongst others by many of the religious ladies of the land? Once a-day to church, a few criticising comments upon the anthem, or some hymn, or about the sermon, make up the 'religion' of the day, the remainder of which is freely occupied with letter-writing, as the Post Office can show, and with reading of light books, novels, and newspapers. Such ladies become presently the wives of the young men of their period. Is it wonderful if they do not make good wives? The remedy belongs to the Church. The question is whether she will fearlessly, lovingly, and wisely, but distinctly, do her duty? The teaching and the preaching can be, and must be, made more *distinct and pointed, without being needlessly offensive*. It is useless to keep on preaching mere doctrines, or sentiment, or history, or anything else, unless the practical side of all be brought home. It was said a few months ago of a popular preacher in a very large church, that 'They all liked him till he came to bring home to them the importance of purity.' But it must be done, or this country will be in danger. There is much that is rotten, and it must be excised. The *Church Catechism* has been kept in abeyance too long, and has given place too much to *sentimental* sermons. *The Church Catechism must be catechised into the people*. Men and women—young and old—must be made to know their privileges and their responsibilities as being baptized, and that they ought, therefore, to be dead to sin, buried to sin, risen to a better life, and therefore to 'mortify their earthly members.' People must be taught 'to keep their body in temperance, soberness, and chastity.' Who amongst the

erring brothers and erring sisters of whom so much that is evil has been made known were ever taught, trained, catechised, or preached to, as St. Paul would have treated them? The novel and letter-writing have taken the place of catechising. The lounge and the perusal of some smart critique upon the Bible, or the preacher have taken the place of devotion. Primitive high morality has given place to ironical speeches against Christianity, until a licentious lunge by a bold sceptic has proved successful, and the restraints of Christianity have given place to the broadest utterances of infidelity. A 'Society for the Reformation of Manners' appears to be almost demanded. But, surely, such a Society exists already? Is not the Church of God intended to be this? Is it not this? What manner of men ought members of the Church to be? Here is the true force for remedying the terribly immoral state of society. If only the clergy and the laity will take the matter in hand, as Church people ought to take it, this pestilence would be driven from our midst; but their must be devotedness and devotion not in the clergy only but in the laity as well. Sunday must be treated once again, by Christians, as the Christians Sabbath, as the Lord's Day, as the Sunday or first day of the week. A better example at home is often needed in this particular. The people of rank and fashion must find their way to church (as their respected ancestors did) for *evening prayer as well as on Sunday morning*. Men as well as women must be brought to attend church, and the services must be hearty, manly, intelligent, and good, and the sermon clear, plain, loving, and homely. Fathers and mothers must set a good specimen of a sound Christian practical life. All the sentiment, and doctrine, and fine preaching in the world, will not meet this fearful evil, although the clergy must be circumspect in their language. —Church Bells.

### HOME RULE AND THE CHURCH OF IRELAND.

The interests of the Church of Ireland have scarcely received sufficient consideration from English Churchmen in the discussion of Irish politics. Disestablishment has not dissolved the union between the two Sister Churches, nor can any human power separate them. Both are integral and sound branches of the Catholic Church. Their early history and fortunes have been different; but the peculiarly secreted bonds which have for centuries connected them are too many and too strong to be submerged or obliterated by the rough waves of St. George's Channel. Their use of the same matchless Liturgy, their adherence to the same Creeds and Articles of Faith, their maintenance of the same primitive and Scriptural orders of Ministry, proclaim them to be one. Then their common protest against the supremacy and errors of Rome has deepened and strengthened their union. Many, too, of our most distinguished Bishops and other clergy, have been proud to acknowledge the Church of Ireland as their mother, whilst not a few illustrious men, such as Whately and Trench, have crossed the Channel to shed the lustre of their learning and piety over the Sister Church. We should, therefore, be unfaithful to our most cherished traditions if we were to regard her future welfare with indifference. We cannot, indeed, undo the grievous wrongs inflicted by Disestablishment and Disendowment, but we should at least do our utmost to prevent further injury to her material interests. The gravity of the danger can hardly be questioned, when we consider on the one hand the inevitable consequences of the schemes of the Separatists and Home Rulers, and on the other hand the