

The Church Guardian

— EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR: —

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CALENDAR FOR APRIL.

APRIL 7—6th Sunday in Lent. Palm Sunday.
[Notice of Holy Week Days.]

" 8—Monday before Easter.

" 9—Tuesday before Easter.

" 10—Wednesday before Easter.

" 11—Thursday before Easter.

" 12—GOOD FRIDAY. Pr. Pss., M. 22, 40,
54; E. 69, 88.

" 13—Easter Even.

" 14—EASTER DAY.—(Pr. Pss., M. 2, 57
111; E. 113 114, 118 Ps. Anthem
instead of *Venite*. A. ha. Cr. Pr.
Pref. in Com. office till 21st April.
[Notice of Monday and Tuesday.]

" 15—Monday in Easter Week.

" 16—Tuesday in Easter Week.

" 21—1st Sunday after Easter. [Notice of
St. Mark]

" 25—ST. MARK (Evangelist and Martyr.

" 29—2nd Sunday after Easter. [Notice of
St. Philip and St. James.]

For Holy Week, 1895.

BY THE CROSS.

[A Sermon Preached at St Saviour's Church,
Southwark, on Sunday evening, the 30th March,
being Palm Sunday, 1890.]

BY THE REV. CANON FLEMING, B.D.

"By the Cross."—St. John xix. 25.

It was high noon in Judea, and the holy city of Jerusalem was bathed in the sunlight. The eager and angry population, who had been convulsed with excitement throughout the day, were like tired children: they were now lulled to temporary repose. The morning sun had shone upon the mock trial of our SAVIOUR before Pilate. That was followed by His reckless condemnation, and for three hours the Son of God had hung upon that cross, His body racked with torture, His soul bearing the iniquities of a world, and the dimness of death beginning to hover over His eyes. And yet that was the grandest moment of His life, that was the crowning of our Lord's mission. Now He had accomplished all that He had come to do. Nature herself was in sympathy with the Master-hand that made it. The sun was eclipsed. At this moment the heavens were draped in black sackcloth: "There was darkness over the earth from the sixth to the ninth hour." The world paused as it looked upon the death of CHRIST; and angels must have been there, we cannot doubt it. Our Lord had said that if He had only chosen to pray to His FATHER, twelve legions of angels would have been at His beckoning and command. We cannot doubt, though they were not seen, they were envying that cross upon which CHRIST was dying, or they were kneeling in reverent worship at the foot of that cross: "Which things angels desired to look into,"

But where are the men? Where are His friends? Where are His disciples? Where are the multitudes whom He had fed? Where are the many whom He had cured of diseases, opened their eyes, unstopped their ears, cleansed the lepers, raised the dead? Where are they? Not one, not one friend, not one disciple, not one hero, not one man: "They all forsook Him and fled." It was reserved for woman to be true to CHRIST at the last: "Now, there stood by the cross of JESUS His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary, the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene;" and to their honor be it said that "wherever in this world there is sorrow, or suffering, woman is to be found. She is to be found in the cell of our prisons, like an Elizabeth Fry; she is to be found upon the skirts of our battle fields staunching the wounds of those who are bleeding to death, or pouring the cordial down the throat of the dying; she is to be found to-night in every ward of every hospital in our metropolis, and in our land, and in the world, like a ministering angel to the sick and the dying. And here it was a cluster of timid frail women, and they alone were the body-guard of the cross of JESUS. And if there are any of us men here that are ashamed of CHRIST, as Peter was, if there are any of us here that think religion may be a very good thing for women and children, but not a good thing for men, if there are any of us men here that think religion is a sickly thing and an unmanly thing, here is shame to us when we look at these women who stood by the cross of CHRIST.

This week, brethren, the Church summons us all to stand by this Cross. This is the festival of the Atonement, as next Sunday will be the festival of the Resurrection, and we are asked, men and women, and our children, to stand with these holy women of old at the foot of the Cross. And every prayer, every care, every wish, every word, every sin, every sorrow, we may breathe at the foot of the Cross. We will offer our prayer for Him Who hung upon it, and we will say, as we look on Him: "Thy kingdom come." Do we think of those words when we so often repeat them in the services of our Church, or in our home, or with our own lips alone: "Thy kingdom come"? for when that kingdom shall have come into men's hearts, "then shall CHRIST see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied." We will offer prayer for ourselves each one of us: "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom," because there is only one salvation for us all, there is only one way for the king and the beggar, for the purple and the rags, for the vilest and the purest, for the best of us and the worst. So we will all breathe the same prayer at the cross; and we will pray for others. Never let us forget to pray for others. We will pray for those who do not yet pray for themselves, but we tell them that the day is coming when they will have to pray for themselves; we will pray for the careless, we will pray for the Christless, we will pray for those who have never yet thought of their soul, for the sick who cannot be with us to-night, that the sorrowing that are in their homes may be comforted, for the sceptic who cannot believe, for the infidel who will not believe. But is this too large a prayer? Is it too much for us to pray for all these? What! when Christ Who hung upon that cross said before He ever reached it: "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." Lord, Thou hast been lifted up upon that cross, then draw us all unto Thyself, that all may be convinced, and won, and rescued, and redeemed! And hear the cry of our Litany: "By Thine agony and bloody sweat, by Thy cross and passion good Lord deliver us!"

But why is this called the cross, the Cross? Is not our world a world of crosses? Have we not all our crosses to bear? Is not our cross the cross to each one of us? Some of you here may have a lighter cross, some of you a very

heavy cross, but whatever be the cross it is the cross to you and to me. Then why is this the Cross? Why is this singled out? for there were three crosses there. Why is this rugged one in the centre singled out to be the cross in all the world? This little emphasis, this little monosyllable, is the key to that which we commemorate in all this great festival of the Atonement that CHRIST made. This is not a man only that is dying, it is not a martyr only that is dying, it is not an angel only that is dying—it is the GOD MAN, CHRIST JESUS, Who hangs upon that cross.

Do you tell me that, when I contemplate the death of CHRIST, I am to learn by looking at that death how to die myself? That does not help me much. That would not encourage, but rather discourage me; for how can I, a sinful man, ever die, like One Who was the Sinless Man? How can it be possible for me ever in this respect to imitate the death of our LORD and MASTER? No, tell me to do impossible things if you like. Tell me to outvie the genius of the philosopher, and though I have not his genius, tell me to try to wring out of the face of nature all the secrets that she can give to men; or tell me to rival the pencil of Rubens, and the chisel of Phidias, and though I have neither the one nor the other—and, if I had, I have not the art and the skill—tell me as they did, to make the very canvas to speak and the marble to breathe; or tell me if I can to follow the inspiration of the poet, and with his ecstasy give wings to my imagination. I will try to outvie the philosopher, I will try to rival the artist, I will try to be a poet, but never tell me, a sinful man, to try to die like the sinless CHRIST, for that is impossible; in the common nature of things it is out of the question. No, if I am to get strength in the view of my own death when it comes, I must look at men, sinful men, who have died as I must die. I must go into the biographies of this book, and read there how saint after saint of God died, leaning, resting, trusting, on this SAVIOUR; whether it was in the days of Job, when he said "I know that my REDEEMER liveth," or whether it was in His own days, when His disciples had believed upon Him, or sick people whom He had healed had been brought to the knowledge of that SAVIOUR. I must learn to say this for myself, and I must die alone; therefore, I must look at others like myself to learn how to die. Or I must go outside the biographies of the Bible, and look at men in all ages who have lived and died as Christians. I must go back to the aged Polycarp, who at the age of eighty-six said: "Eighty-six years have I served my LORD and MASTER: He will not forsake me now: bind me to the stake." Or I must look at that timid and gentle but sturdy Scottish maiden, who, in those days of persecution which once disgraced our land, as she was consigned to death, saw the tide rising around her, but sang with her last voice hymns of cheer and of joy, until they were hushed in the ocean, only to be finished to the accompaniment of angels' harps upon a sea of glass. No, if CHRIST is to help me I must look at his life, not at His death. I must see how He lived as the SON of MAN, and if you would help me and tell me to look at CHRIST, tell me not to look at CHRIST as He died that I may die like the Sinless One, but tell me to look at His life. If you would set an example before me that will help me, show me that example. Show me Him as a Boy twelve years of age at that interview with the doctors of the law in the Temple, when He taught us all in the truest life: "Wist ye not that I must be about my FATHER'S business?" Show Him to me as the man, when He was feeding those multitudes with five loaves and two fishes, when He was opening the eyes of the blind and unstopping the ears of the deaf, and giving strength to the withered limbs, and cleansing the lepers, and raising the dead. Show me His