

The Church Guardian

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CALENDAR FOR APRIL.

APRIL 2.—Thursday before Easter.

" 3.—Good Friday.

" 4.—Easter Even.

" 5.—Easter Day.

" 6.—Monday in Easter Week.

" 7.—Tuesday in Easter Week.

" 12.—First Sunday after Easter.

" 19.—Second " " "

" 25.—ST. MARK.

" 26.—Third Sunday after Easter.

Fourth Sunday after Easter.

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above."
James i. 17.

The services of the day are calculated to impress upon our minds the principle the Collect asserts: that God only can order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men. This is chosen as an appropriate subject of our consideration, at a season when the connection between the sacrifice and resurrection of Christ and the permanent residence of the Comforter amongst us is brought before us. Scripture has laid down the proposition, and our own hearts echo it, "That the way of a man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh, to direct his steps." "The heart of the sons of men is full of evil; madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead." This will render it evident to every thinking mind that it is God, and God only, "which worketh in us, both to will, and to do of His good pleasure." Setting out with this proposition, which has the concurrent testimony of Scripture, of history and of our own hearts, the prayer of the Church is, that God would vouchsafe to us the assistance we so urgently stand in need of; that, contrary to the corrupt disposition of our hearts, which are desperately wicked, we may be led to love the thing which He commands, and to desire that which He promises. The thing which he commands is that which He has delivered in His most Holy Word. The passage selected for the Epistle sets before us the word of God, and as the means He has vouchsafed to us towards attaining it. In accordance with the doctrine the Collect asserts, St. James, in this passage, tells us that "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights." "Of His own will," not by any act or faculty of ours, "begat He us, by the word of truth." He called us out of darkness into light; He revealed to babes that which had been hid from the wisest and most learned of

the earth, to whom the simple truths of the Gospel were foolishness. A sense of this, of our entire dependence on the wisdom which is from above, for the enlightening of our souls, will make us "swift to hear," anxious to consult and to be instructed in a knowledge of that which is made unto us "Wisdom and righteousness!" "Slow to speak," to venture our own opinion, or to distrust that wisdom which is thus of God; to form our own views of things spiritual, independent of, or in opposition to that which is written for our learning. "Slow to wrath; for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God," and is overruled to fulfil His purposes: "For the wrath of man shall praise Thee; the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain. God only can order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men." Laying apart, therefore, all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, coming in repentance of all past sin, and a determination, by God's blessing, to amend our lives, which is the first step, towards Christian faith, "We shall receive with meekness the engrafted word," the guide, the instrument, as it were, by which we are to attain that knowledge necessary to work out our salvation.

We are to receive this with meekness, remembering whose word it is; not as worldly wisdom valuable in itself, or as the result of our own reasoning, but as the Word of God, His most precious gift, coming down from the Father of Lights. We must learn to look upon it as His engrafted Word. Now the image that this presents to us is one that enforces the same truth taught us in the whole passage—the wisdom of God is engrafted on the wild stock, that is, the reasoning powers of man; without this they may produce their own fruit—the follies, the superstitions, the idolatries, which have at so many different periods resulted as the fruits of man's reason—but to bring forth the fruits of this engrafted wisdom, we must check and prune away the wild shoots that spring below the graft, that is, from the perverse reasoning of our own hearts, and which produce that filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness before spoken of. Thus, through God's engrafted Word, and this alone, as the means which He has Himself vouchsafed to us, and left us as our guide, may we learn to love the things which He commands. But in the Collect we desire also that which He promises. What this is, is shown us in the portion selected for the Gospel. "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I depart, I will send the Comforter unto you." The Comforter it was who should remain with us, and guide us into all truth, for "He shall receive of Christ's, and show it unto us." His office it has been from the first to inspire holy men of old, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and His holy office still it is to guide and direct that holy Scripture, which is thus given us by inspiration of God, to our sanctification. He it is who is ever with us to teach us to understand and to apply what we read; to make all things work together for good to them that love God; to pour abroad into the hearts of them that seek Him the sanctifying and enlightening influences of His Spirit. The fulfilment in our own persons, and in the Church, of this gracious promise, that He will ever be with us, even unto the end of the world, is that which we are taught to desire; nor can we separate this from the preceding part of the petition, for as every good gift is of God, and we are wholly insufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, so must we

desire that which God has promised—the assistance of His Holy Spirit—that we may be enabled to love the thing which God has in His holy Word commanded.

"Among the sundry and manifold changes of the world, our hearts will surely then be fixed on heaven, where true joys are to be found;" we shall so move through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal. The world, with its sundry and manifold changes, is the strong man armed that keepeth possession of our hearts. It is the opposing power to the Word and the Spirit, which alone are on God's side. As the Israelites of old were led into the idolatries and superstitions of their neighbors, so, in our days, must we guard ourselves against all such communion with the world as may lead us to go with the multitude to do evil. Our strength is His engrafted Word; that spiritual monitor will direct us to pray for God's Holy Spirit to guide us through its pages unto all truth; that, strong in this, through all the changes of life our hearts may there, even in heaven, be most surely fixed, where, through Jesus Christ, true joys are to be found. And may the Holy Spirit of God, promised in the Gospel of the day as our guide into all truth, so graft the truths and consolations of His Word in our hearts, that they may bring forth in us the fruits of a holy and religious life.—Hon. and Rev. S. Best, M.A.

Our Youth.

Were an inquirer to examine carefully into the distinguishing features of the religious and intellectual activity of the present day, he could scarcely fail to be struck by the degree of attention that is being paid to the young. The Common School system of our own country, with all its defects, is a striking testimony to the value which is set upon the education of the youth of the land, and we cannot doubt that it is exercising a beneficial influence on the intellectual condition of our population.

The Sunday-School, which is now in the second century of its existence, continues to excite increasing attention among Christians of every name. Perhaps there is only a slight exaggeration in the wording of an advertisement which has appeared in some of our English exchanges, in which it is affirmed, "The one hope of the Church and the country to-day is the Sunday-School." Certainly, very few of our Church institutions can compare with it for general usefulness, and it fully merits all the attention that is paid to it.

In addition to these are found many subordinate institutions, all tending to the general improvement. Some are intended to lift the very degraded from their low estate; and it is one of the most pleasing features of the great work to which we allude, that it pays such careful attention to the lowest of the low. By means of homes for the homeless, refuges for the neglected and reformatories for the erring, together with various and ingenious means of finding employment for the idle, the waifs and strays of society are gathered up and cared for.

In addition to all these is to be noted the diversified literature prepared expressly for the young, much of which is singularly adapted to fulfil its design. Some of our most able writers in all fields of learning deem it not beneath their dignity to prepare manuals of instruction suited to