

# The Church Guardian

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## CALENDAR FOR MARCH.

MARCH 1.—Second Sunday in Lent.  
" 8.—Third " "  
" 15.—Fourth " "  
" 22.—Fifth " "  
" 25.—ANNUNCIATION.  
" 29.—PALM SUNDAY—next before EASTER  
SUNDAY.

### Fourth Sunday in Lent.

"So, then, brethren, we are not children of the bond  
woman, but of the free."—Gal. iv. 31.

The whole of the services selected by the Church for the season of Lent, and the subjects of contemplation and reflection they induce, are calculated to point out the freedom and spirituality of our religion, and to divest our fasts and all our religious observances, of the merely ceremonial character, which, in the eyes of the thoughtless or superstitious, they are apt to assume. There is a life in the principles taught by our Church, which makes its appointed ordinances not mere matters of observance, but means of personal sanctification, and we are grossly in error, we know not what spirit we are of, if we press the observance of the fast for its own sake as an appointed means, without an immediate reference to the spiritual effect on our hearts it is intended to produce. We have seen this in the preceding Lent services; let us proceed also to trace it in this, and to consider the view of the Church, as on this Sunday, would have us take of the doctrine of humiliation and spiritual preparation for the mysteries of Easter. We confess in the collect, as necessary to make our addresses to the Throne of Grace acceptable, that, for our evil deeds we worthily deserve to be punished; while our prayer, founded on this,—that is, on our helplessness and unworthiness,—is, that by the comfort of God's grace, we may in His mercy be relieved. The epistle, from that of St. Paul to the Galatians, draws a contrast between our state and that of the Jew, under the image of the two sons of Abraham, and would appear to point out, that while we owe our present spiritual state entirely to God's mercy, who, even in our birth, has made us children of the free woman, we are to read, in the bondage of our brethren, the purposes to which it may be made subservient to our spiritual improvement. As a schoolmaster, the law has led us to Christ, and through Him only are we endowed with the glorious liberty of the sons of God. The veil is still over the

hearts of the children of Agar; the heavenly Jerusalem only is free. This heavenly Jerusalem, typified as the Jerusalem of old, is the Church catholic and invisible, which is the mother of us all. Of this it had been written, that we should come from the east and the west, and sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. We, like Isaac, are the children of promise, for it was promised that in the seed of Abraham all the families of the earth should be blessed, and, "in thy seed that is Christ's." "We, then, brethren," in the words of the text, "are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free." We are free from all the ritual of the Mosaic law, save only as its ordinances may be conducive to carry on with energy the warfare of the spirit against the flesh. Let us consider the law as our schoolmaster, and we shall understand the spiritual object and nature of fasting as enforced by our Church. It is not a slavish ceremonial, the object of which is accomplished in austerity and privation, but a means whereby a higher degree of spirituality is attained, and the mind of the Christian placed in a more advantageous position for entertaining the high mysteries of the faith. We are no longer under bondage, but are free, yet must we not use our liberty as a cloak of maliciousness; the same end must be attained, only by more spiritual means, that was proposed under the older covenant of bondage. The schoolmaster has no object in laying down arbitrary rules that put his scholars to inconvenience, and place restraint upon the freedom of their actions; he has no object in this, but, as knowing that such rules and discipline are a part of that moral training which is the very soul of education; that the first lesson we have to learn is, that we are to deny ourselves, and bring everything into subjection,—that the spiritual part of us may not be clogged by the lusts or longings of the flesh,—that the good seed may not be choked by the cares and follies of life. The schoolmaster who does his duty in this, has never been supposed to interfere with the liberty of his scholars; he has merely endeavoured to give that direction to their education which is necessary to secure their success. In the same manner does that perfect law of liberty, in which we walk, direct us only, through means, as fasting, humiliation, and prayer, to the great end which it proposes, the spiritual advancement of our souls in holiness, in faith, in righteousness. This cannot in any sense be said to interfere with that liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. Let us use the ordinances of our Church as we should be ready to use the experience of a schoolmaster who had endeared himself, by his sound and practical judgment, as well as by his affectionate interest in our welfare, and we shall then attain the object the Church proposes,—even our sanctification. The Gospel sets before us a miraculous proof of the subjection of our temporal to our spiritual necessities. They who thronged after our Lord to hear Him were fed with bread from heaven. Neglecting the food of the body, they sought, first, the food of the soul: a practical illustration was thus afforded the disciples of their seeking, first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and that all things that were needful should be added unto them. It was fasting that this vast multitude came to our Lord, who, pitying their necessities, fed them with that miraculous, yet humble, meal that is recorded in the Gospel. Let it not be lost on us, that He who could thus feed five thousand, by a miracle, still

directed his disciples to gather up the fragments, that nothing might be lost. How many and wise are the lessons this should teach us in things temporal. In things spiritual, we shall learn to think lightly of no means, to despise no opportunities of promoting the growth of the soul in grace, if, by any means, we may bring home to our convictions, the truth wrought on the minds of the disciples. "This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world." This practical exercise the Church would have us make use of. It would have us humble ourselves, as in the words of the collect, confessing that, for our evil deeds, we worthily deserve to be punished, and that by the comfort of God's grace only can we be relieved. It points out to us in the epistle how that relief has been afforded us; and, in the Gospel, turns our attention from our temporal to our spiritual necessities, showing us how abstinence in the one has been, once at least, practically made to promote the other, and affording us an example how the flesh may be subdued to the spirit, and the whole creature, body and soul, be brought into a fit temperament for exercise of the spiritual functions, and for the nearer approach and contemplation of the high and holy mysteries of our faith.—(Hon. and Rev. S. Best, M.A.)

## Appointments.

Mr. John B. Strong, 91 Lockman street, Halifax, has accepted the position of Local Agent and Canvasser for the city of Halifax for the GUARDIAN.

Mr. W. B. Tanton, of Pictou, N. S., has accepted the position of Travelling Agent and Canvasser for the Dioceses of Fredericton and Nova Scotia.

We commend both these gentlemen to the consideration of our friends in the Lower Provinces, and trust that the clergy and laity will give them such assistance in their work as may be in their power. The GUARDIAN already occupies the leading place as *the Church paper of the Dominion* but we would see the number of its readers *doubled*. We are constantly in receipt of most gratifying testimony from all parts of the Dominion as to the estimation in which the GUARDIAN is held, and we rejoice in it not alone on personal grounds, but chiefly because we hope it evidences good work being done through its means for The Church in this land. We have not hitherto published any of these references; but in view of the appointments above named we may be pardoned in citing the following from many others.

From the Most Rev. the METROPOLITAN: "I am quite willing to accept the CHURCH GUARDIAN as at present conducted as the Organ of the Church in this Diocese; it seems to me to be conducted in the spirit of the Church, and with commendable zeal and earnestness."

The Lord Bishop of Nova Scotia at a public meeting held in Halifax shortly after the transfer of the paper, as well as at the meeting of Synod, most kindly referred to the change in ownership and place of publication, and declared his intention to continue his approval and use it as the organ of his Diocese.

The Lord Bishop of Ontario writes: "I cordially approve of the CHURCH GUARDIAN, and wish it every success, as I like its tone and general character."