

SPECIAL DAYS: FEBRUARY.

The notable days in the calendar for this month are the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, often called Candlemas Day, from the Roman Catholic custom of blessing candles at this time, and the three Sundays before Lent. In the lessons for these days we seem to see the approaching fast casting its shadow before—or they may be considered as three separate calls, summoning us to prepare to make the best of the solemn season. Let us who call ourselves or are called by His Church Christ's faithful soldiers and servants take this summons to heart and consider what we can do to make this coming Lent profitable to ourselves and to others. Every Lenten season should be a mission season. Let us do what is in our power to make it so. Let these weeks be seasons of earnest prayer for our clergymen, for the parish, for the whole Church. Let us plead earnestly for the outpouring of the Spirit of grace upon God's own people who are called by His name. If we are to have what all true Christians long for, a revival of spiritual religion, it must begin at the House of God. "Ye that make mention of the Lord keep not silence, and give Him no rest till He establish and till He make Jerusalem a praise upon the earth." (Is. lxii., 6).—*Parish Visitor, N.Y.*

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

In the course of the sermon delivered by the Bishop of Algoma at the united thanksgiving service held in St. James' Church, Toronto, on the evening of Thanksgiving Day, at which many of the city clergymen were present, with the Bishop of the diocese, allusion was made to the privilege enjoyed by members of the Church of England in being under her protecting wing: "Would that," said the Bishop, "the treasure were more adequately prized by her children! The Church of England occupies a position altogether unique and peculiar, which finds no parallel on either the right hand or the left. In the one direction stands the vast, imposing, venerable structure of the Papacy, a solid, compact unity, organized with a skill all but supernatural, and consecrated in the affections of millions of devoted adherents by the traditions of well-nigh a dozen centuries. On the other, scattered thickly over the entire field of view, are pitched the tents of a host of religious dominations, each surmounted by its own peculiar standard, erected, some within the memory of living men, the oldest of them dating only to the era of the Reformation. Yet on neither hand, right or left, can we discover a Christianity which fairly or fully reproduces the Divine original. Learning, genius, eloquence, heroic self-sacrifice, deep, undying devotion to duty, unswerving loyalty to inherited traditions, stainless integrity of conduct and character—all these, in instances for number numberless, challenge and receive the tribute of our respect and admiration: but when we seek in any one of them the Christian scheme of the New Testament in its rounded, full-orbed completeness, we seek, alas! in vain. As Christ, its founder, instituted it, and His apostles maintained it, Christianity embodied within itself two elements, evangelic truth and apostolic order: *the faith* that was once delivered to the saints *having* for its centre the personal Christ, and for its circumference the vast circle of living verities which Christ brought with Him as a revelation from his Father; and, secondly, the *visible organized Church, with its divinely-*

appointed threefold ministry, constituted in various Orders, as the angels are, and constructed, like heaven's hierarchy, on principles of subordination and authority. In the union, I repeat, of these two fundamental elements, each maintained in its primitive purity, consists a true scriptural Christianity. Now this union exists no longer in either of the opposite directions I have indicated. Rome, and our separated Protestant brethren, agree in putting asunder what God has joined together. One retains, indeed, the apostolic ideal of the ministry, but has long since lost all claim to the possession of unadulterated evangelic truth; the others hold fast, each by their distinctive aspects of evangelic truth, but reject the form of Ministry by which the unbroken testimony of fifteen centuries proves this truth to have been promulgated, and to which, therefore, they to-day stand indebted for their possession of it. What now of our Communion? That she maintains in its integrity the threefold Order of the ministry, you know—maintains it so conscientiously that its retention in some form is a *sine qua non* in any proposed scheme for a restored visible Church unity. But is she equally inflexible in maintaining and preaching a pure Gospel? For answer I refer you, not to the utterances of her individual representatives, but, better standard still, to her Book of Common Prayer. It is not certainly perfect; naught short of a special supernatural inspiration resting on the heads and guiding the pens of its compilers could have made it so, and this none of her champions, even the most ardent, have ever claimed. There are defects here, let it be freely admitted; defects of arrangement, for example, rendering it largely a sealed book to the unfamiliar eye; defects, again, of phraseology, traceable mainly to the changes which have passed over the English language since the era of the Reformation; possibilities, too, of misinterpretation, which, however, it shares only in common with the Word of God; but errors of doctrine, dilutions or perversions of simple Gospel teaching—of these it is as innocent as the Scriptures from which it is so largely drawn. Ingenious misinterpreters, determined at all costs to slander the spiritual mother that bore them, and the book from which their earliest devotion, offered by their mother's knee, drew all their nourishment, may indeed fling their aspersions broadcast; but we challenge them to show where, in a solitary instance, the Book of Common Prayer, like the Roman Missal, leads men away from Christ to other and human mediators, or obscures the doctrine of His sufficiency, or encourages the sinner to add aught of his own imagined merits to the efficacy of the Saviour's finished and perfected atonement. Where, for example, does it exalt or exaggerate the value of the Sacraments into agencies worthy to be substitutes for Him whom they symbolize, making that to be the end which the Church's founder designed only to be the means, and then causing as fatal a hurt to men's souls as he would to their bodies who would offer for the satisfying of their thirst, not water, but only the empty gilded cup? It counts for something surely, brethren, something to thank God devoutly for, to be members of a Church whose authorized formularies have so vigilantly guarded the simplicity of 'the faith once delivered to the saints' through the ceaseless mutations of the passing centuries, and in whose hands the water of life, lifted to the thirsty lips of the sinning and suffering, the sick and the dying, is as pure to-day as when first issued, fresh and clear, from its sacred fountain-head."—*Algoma Missionary News.*

BIBLE STUDY.

The Bishop of London, recently addressing the clergy of his diocese, reminded them of the importance of Bible knowledge in dealing with the sick, the dying, the ignorant, the erring, and the doubter. He begged them to lay it to heart that it was the imperative duty of every man of God to be constantly studying the Bible with all

the aids which he could obtain for that study, that the Bible should be for him the book from which illustrations, examples, precepts, warnings, and, above all, messages of love, might be readily gathered for use in the ministry. He entreated them to consider how impossible it was to depend upon old memories that were fading out of the mind, and how impossible it was to use with effect the repetition of passages that had become stale to them, simply by their constant reference to them, and to them alone. If they were to use the Bible rightly in their ministry, it was absolutely necessary that their knowledge of it should be always fresh. Whatever else might be said of the Bible, this, at any rate, marked it from any other book ever written—that it was perpetually speaking with authority from God, and that that authority, the more they studied it, was the more assured to them by the voice of their own consciences when they read it. Why was it that the Bible was like nothing else ever written had been, what, possibly, nothing else could ever be? Because He who had given it to them intended that it should be the very instrument they were to use to make known His wonderful message. This study, therefore, was so absolutely necessary for the performance of all other duties, be they what they might, that nothing else could put it aside or make it unnecessary, and amid all the labours they were called upon to perform this must find a place—a regularly appointed, sure place—and it must dislodge anything which would prevent them from giving it the necessary time.—*Word and Work.*

LOOKING FOR A RECTOR.

As several of our parishes are now engaged in this important business, a few hints will not be inopportune.

First, we say to the Vestry, do realize that this is a religious matter, a solemn matter. It is distressing often to meet with a Vestry, and confer with them on a new Rector—all the thought and speech is so far away from the ambassadorship for Christ, the Steward of the mysteries of God. The inquiries, the criticisms, could not be more secular were a church architect or a collector to be chosen. How it grates on the ear, the qualifications named.

2. Don't wait in order to get names till you are bewildered in the clamor, "you must hear my man." When you get a name, follow it up till you know whether you want, or don't want him who bears it.

3. Don't be carried away with the idea of having a clergyman you never heard of. If a minister in your diocese has proved himself an able, faithful and godly man; don't turn away from him when his name is mentioned, on the ground "Oh we know him, the people have seen him." There seems to be a great charm to a Vestry in getting some one they never heard of before. In business circles a known man is considered the best man.

4. Don't ask a minister to come and spend a Sunday, with the intention if he does not please to hand him his fee, and say, good bye. When you think you have the right name, make all the inquiry you will, visit quietly the parish, look into the Sunday school, read the parochial report, see the Bishop, or some leading clergymen of the diocese, then if you are satisfied make the call, and open the way for a visit.

5. Read carefully the Canon "of vacant Churches and Clerical settlement and removal," and see exactly what is the Bishop's province in the matter.

6. Make your call very explicit in the salary pledged, the manner of payment, the use of the rectory. Don't lead a minister to think that his salary will be increased unless you see that this is entirely practicable.—*The Church Helper, Mich.*