

Parish and Home.

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CALENDAR FOR MARCH.

LESSONS.

- 1 **1st Sunday in Lent (Ember Collect daily).** *Morning*—Gen. 19, v. 12 to v. 30; Mark 6 to v. 14. *Evening*—Gen. 22 to v. 28, or 23; Rom. 12.
- 10 **2nd Sunday in Lent.** *Morning*—Gen. 27 to v. 41; Mark 9, v. 30. *Evening*—Gen. 28 or 32; 1 Cor. 3.
- 17 **3rd Sunday in Lent.** *Morning*—Gen. 37; Mark 13, v. 14. *Evening*—Gen. 39 or 40; 1 Cor. 9.
- 24 **4th Sunday in Lent.** *Morning*—Gen. 42; Luke 1, v. 26 to v. 46. *Evening*—Gen. 43 or 45; 1 Cor. 14, v. 20.
- 25 **Annunciation of Virgin Mary.** *Morning*—Gen. 3 to v. 16; Luke 1, v. 46. *Evening*—Isaiah 52, v. 7 to v. 13; 1 Cor. 15 to v. 35.
- 31 **5th Sunday in Lent.** *Morning*—Exodus 3; Luke 5 to v. 17. *Evening*—Exodus 5 or 6, v. 14; 2 Cor. 4.

LOST AND FOUND.

THOUGH we long in sin-wrought blindness
From Thy gracious paths have strayed,
Cold to Thee and all Thy kindness,
Willful, reckless, or afraid;
Through dim clouds that gather round us
Thou hast sought and Thou hast found us.

Of from Thee we veil our faces,
Children-like, to cheat Thine eyes;
Sin, and hope to hide the traces;
From ourselves, ourselves disguise;
'Neath the webs enwoven round us
Thy soul-piercing glance has found us.

Sudden, 'midst our idle chorus,
O'er our sin Thy thunders roll,
Death His signal waves before us,
Night and terror take the soul;
Till through double darkness round us
Looks a star—and Thou hast found us.

O most merciful, most holy,
Light Thy wanderers on their way;
Keep us ever Thine, Thine wholly,
Suffer us no more to stray!
Cloud and storm off gather round us;
We were lost, but Thou hast found us.

—F. T. Palgrave.

LENT: ITS ORIGIN AND HISTORY.—It seems but a few weeks ago that we were celebrating the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and yet the season of Lent has already overtaken us. The events in our Lord's earthly life, commemorated by the church, pass by in very quick succession. In four or five months we review thirty-three years. From Epiphany to Ash Wednesday we pass over our Saviour's boyhood, and youth, and early manhood, and the season of Lent directs

our attention to those forty days of fasting in the wilderness, immediately after His baptism, when Jesus was expressly led up by the Holy Spirit to be tempted of the devil.

The observance of Lent is of very ancient, if not of primitive, institution. It very possibly originated in a fast of forty hours observed in very early times, and commemorative of the forty hours that the body of Christ lay in the tomb. Gradually it was expanded to forty days, in allusion to the forty days' fast of Christ, and possibly, too, of Moses and Elijah. In the early and mediæval church, Lent was very rigidly observed as a season of fasting, the severity of the discipline increasing towards Passion Week. The Sundays, of course, were not included. The day before Ash Wednesday, known as Shrove Tuesday, or Carnival day, was usually a time of the greatest revelry, feasting, and mirth-making, in anticipation of the abstinence about to follow. Lent brought with it, besides abstention from flesh and various other foods, a withdrawal, at least outwardly, from all the levity, gaiety, and common amusements of the world.

THE SEASON OF LENT IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.—The forty days of Lent are carefully observed by the Church of England. They are ushered in by Ash Wednesday, for which day there is, besides collect, epistle, gospel, and proper psalms, a special form of service known as the *Commination, or denouncing of God's anger and judgments against sinners*. The collects, epistles, and gospels for each Sunday have special characteristics in keeping with the season, which is regarded as one of abstinence and repentance—of deep heart-searching, and much prayer to God for stronger faith and a holier life. The forty days are referred to in the tables at the beginning of the Prayer Book as *days of fasting or abstinence*. But, as far as abstinence from food is intended, there is no compulsion. The matter is quite voluntary, and left to the feelings of each individual. The church in no way prescribes any special manner of fasting or

abstaining, and there are no special episcopal instructions or charges issued every year, as in the Roman Church. This has never been done in the reformed Church of England. The principle of our fasting must always be that voluntary one laid down by Jesus Himself. In pointing out the forty days of Lent, and certain other days, the church simply suggests that these are the most appropriate times in the year for fasting on the part of those who desire habitually to abstain from food for religious reasons.

HOW DO PEOPLE SPEND LENT?—Does not Lent come to us who are churchmen living in the last days of the nineteenth century with some practical suggestions, or a fresh reminder of our Christian duties? Of course, in a sense, the season never goes unobserved. The world of society, at least, feels it. Instantaneously almost, at the arrival of Ash Wednesday, the social whirl ceases. There are few, if any, large parties, or balls, or entertainments of a purely secular nature. The theatre is neglected by many; merry-making on a large scale is no more; and all the energies and aspirations of society are pent up for forty days—to burst forth again on Easter Monday. This is done, too, in the name of the religion of Jesus Christ.

But to a serious Christian mind there must always be something painful in it. It has long been the object of ridicule in the world, and furnishes every year to the weary, well-nigh exhausted brains of the artists of our comic papers material for many humorous sketches. Ridiculous it certainly is, but it's too serious to be taken altogether as a joke. Is that all that the forty days of Lent brings us? Oh, no! a chorus of voices will reply. People not only abstain from social amusements but they fast. They deprive themselves of many delicacies, and even necessary articles of food. Congenial and pleasant habits, like smoking, for instance, they break off for the time. But to what end is this? As expressive of a sincere desire to banish the world for a time, and draw nearer to God, it is commendable whatever its fruits. But as constituting in itself a little