

## The Church Guardian

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## Special Notice.

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## CALENDAR FOR MARCH.

- MARCH 2 }  
 " 4 } EMBER DAYS.  
 " 5 }  
 " 6—2nd Sunday in Lent.  
 " 13—3rd Sunday in Lent.  
 " 20—4th Sunday in Lent.  
 " 25—Annunciation of The Blessed Virgin Mary.  
 " 27—5th Sunday in Lent.

## LENT.

The counsellings for Lent are many, and the multitude of counsellors sometimes produces confusion. But a few hints as to its improvement may fit into the specific instruction of rectors and aid in their fulfillment.

In use of the Lenten tide then it were well to remember these rules.

(1.) *Be honest* in its improvement. The once ridiculed season has become a recognized period of stated observance. Fashion has accepted it. And herein is the peril. Physically there may be benefit in abstaining from balls and great dinners and substituting theatre parties, card parties and small feasts, but spiritually there is no advantage in such a mode. The world mocks while fashion approves at this perversion of the Lenten idea. Make Lent retirement real by substitution of divine ideas and holy occupations for worldly pleasures, that the joy of such living may be known.

(2.) *Be thorough* in Lenten habits. Use special services, frequent communions, seasons of prayer and retirement, not as forms to be completed, but as agencies, whose value is to be learned, and habits acquired, till the full meaning of the Prayer-book idea of public worship and the Scripture idea of daily prayer be realized in every parish in the land.

(3.) *Be spiritual* in Lenten seeking. Desire the deep things of God's truth. Search for the secrets behind the veil until the unseen becomes the real, the tangible, that which evidently passeth away. Wrestle for entrance within the Holy of Holies. Remain not content with standing in the outer court.

(4.) *Be practical* in Lenten exercises, in fasting and self-discipline, improve those modes, which, while linking the soul to Christ, result in blessings of alms-giving and imparted comfort, that bring a benefit to others as well as him who is thus seeking for divine grace.

(5.) *Be constant* in Lenten effort, carrying the purpose and spirit of the season into the daily occupations of life, that all among whom we move may realize, though not a word be spoken, that there is a virtue going from us which purifies those round about, as by the

very presence of the Master. So living in Lent, the spirit will continue through all the after life, and the disciple be preaching the Master in every thought, and word, and act, by the ceaseless manifestation of the indwelling Christ, who abiding there can never be hidden from the world.

Verily, could we all keep the forty days in such spiritual faithfulness, what soul-feasting would be known throughout the Church, what an advance of the cause of Christ throughout the world, what joy in the Courts of Heaven?

—The Church Record.

## THE WILLING WORKER.

By THE REV. DR. FORREST, VICAR OF ST. JUDE'S, KENSINGTON.

"Who then offereth willingly to consecrate himself this day unto the Lord?" (1 Chron. xxix. 5). At the sacred font we have been all consecrated to God, and again in the renewal of our baptismal vow at the solemn time of confirmation, and that this may be a reality now we must have the true and evergrowing knowledge of God, of His relation to us and of our relation to Him. We must have an increasingly clear understanding of our own case and condition, that we may know all that God is to us, all that He has done and that He is doing for us in and through Christ Jesus our Lord. Are we, then, thus seeking the better to understand the case as between ourselves and God?

Ignorance is not the mother of any devotion that is really deserving of the name. If our consecration could be before the altar of an unknown God it would be simply worth nothing. If our love and devotion are to be of any real value and service it must be born of knowledge; not knowledge of a few pet doctrines or favorite truths, but the knowledge of what God is to us in Christ, broad, enlightened views of our own position as members of Christ's Church.

The work of many of us must be an unknown and an unnoticed thing. The majority of Church workers are, if I may so say, busy underground—nay, the work of the most eminent amongst us will soon be forgotten, or only remembered by a few. The world has got a short memory in those matters, and old names are quickly displaced by new ones. But why should we repine or be depressed or discouraged on this account? You will remember, in his beautiful Epistle to the Philippians, St. Paul specially mentions St. Clement, and then adds, with exquisite grace and courtesy: "And other my fellow-laborers, whose names are in the book of life," as if he would say: "What does it matter though those names do not appear in this letter of mine, though they be not inscribed in any head-roll of human fame, if they are found registered there at last?" Lord help us to live for Thee; to work for Thee "while it is day, for the night cometh"; to glorify Thee in our bodies as well as in our spirits, which both are Thine.

This consecration to God is no cheap nor easy thing. We must not offer unto the Lord that which has cost us nothing. There is the cost of self-discipline which prepares the soul to cope successfully with temptation just as his exercises and evolutions train the soldier to encounter the enemy in the actual campaign. Then there is the diligent and laborious use of the means of grace. I am afraid that the prayers of many of us are fitful and formal and intermittent—forgetful, as we are, that prayer is the master-key which winds up and so keeps the whole spiritual machinery in motion. And then do not we often find ourselves reading our Bibles in a perfunctory manner, as if it were task work—a duty that is to be daily done—no

consciousness within us of feeding on the pure milk or the strong meat of which the Apostle speaks? And so too of many our regular communions, I fear, it may be said that they come without sufficient preparation of heart or expectancy of mind to meet their Lord at His altar, and so go unimpressed and unsatisfied away. Let me, then, urge you with all earnestness to increased diligence. Our spiritual feeling is as liable to alter as we know our natural feeling is.

We can remember some towards whom we once felt ardently; we wonder now how it ever could have been so. We can recall books that we once devoured eagerly that are now positively devoid of any interest for us. We can recall forms of expression into which we once entered fully, thoughts and purposes that were pregnant with interest and meaning for us; and they are now as dreams of the past that cannot be lived over again. Let us take care lest the same thing befall our spiritual life, which may not repeat itself, but stand in continual need of renewed culture and nourishment. If this be neglected or forgotten, the consequences must be serious. And then there is the still heavier cost of antagonism. There has, perhaps, never been since the birth of Christianity a time of greater trial of faith than that in which our lot is cast. Our age is admittedly one of doubt; of doubts on religious questions, some of which touch very closely what is most vital and fundamental.

And remember we sometimes watch the waves of unbelief as they rise higher and higher, and fear that they imperil even the Church herself, founded as she is upon the rock of ages; nay, there are moments of fearfulness when I dare say some of us are actually apprehensive lest they might remove the rock itself. But again we trust and are not afraid, and in the calm confidence of faith we smile to think how God's greatness throws around our incompleteness, around our restlessness—His rest. Then there is the deadly atmosphere of worldly indifference we have continually to breathe, the hand-to-hand encounter with temptation, the inner struggle between flesh and spirit which never ceases, and which shall continue to the very last. All these things we know more of, we have increasing knowledge of, as we daily strive to live nearer to God. And there are times, no doubt, when we grow weary in well-doing, when our purpose seems baffled, and we are tempted almost to give up the fight in disgust and despair. But again we take heart and muster courage, for we know that ours is a cause that must conquer and a hope that will never make ashamed. Our progress may seem small and insignificant, next to nothing, but it is most real; the issue is not doubtful, the end is assured—the thought which was present to the mind of the gifted writer, which he expressed in lines that are not likely to perish—

Whilst the tired waves, vainly breaking,  
 Seem here no painful inch to gain,  
 Far back through creeks and inlets making,  
 Come silent flooding in the main.  
 And not by Eastern windows only,  
 Where daylight comes, comes in the light;  
 In front the sun climbs slow—how slowly—  
 But westward; look, the land is bright.

Two objects we should have in view for Lent: To be temperate in all things, striving to bring under our bodies for the mastery of the soul, and to make our sacrifices yield something to Christ by giving and doing good for other's sake and the Church's.

The solemn season of the Church's humiliation has again come. The call for discipline is sounding in the ears of every member of the Body of our Crucified Lord. Reader, what will you do to crucify your flesh with Christ?