

# The Church Guardian

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## CALENDAR FOR JANUARY.

- JAN. 1—CIRCUMCISION of our Lord.  
“ 5—Friday—Fast.  
“ 6—EPIPHANY.  
“ 7—1st Sunday after the Epiphany.  
“ 12—Friday—Fast.  
“ 14—2nd Sunday after Epiphany.  
“ 19—Friday—Fast.  
“ 21—SEPTUAGESIMA. (*Notice of Conversion of St. Paul*).  
“ 25—Conversion of St. Paul.  
“ 26—Friday—Fast.  
“ 28—SEXAGESIMA. (*Notice of Purification*)

## NOTES ON THE EPISTLES.

By THE REV. H. W. LITTLE, RECTOR HOLY TRINITY, SUSSEX, N.B.

(Author of “Arrows for the King's Archers,” etc.)

SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY.

“The things which concern my infirmities.”  
—II Cor. xi, 30.

I.—The Apostle set forth as an illustrious example of self-denial, zeal and suffering for the Master's sake. God brings good out of evil. We should probably never have had this noble record of labour and suffering had not the character of the Apostle been so maligned that it became necessary for him to vindicate himself and his exercise of the ministerial office. The malignity of Satan made to set forth the glory of God and the faithfulness of His devoted servants. What the Apostle is now saying is not “according to the Lord,” v. 17, but by constraint, as extorted from him by the conduct of the Corinthians. Self-praise is not in itself “according to the Lord,” but is ever from the evil one, as ministering rather to men's bad passions and to their strifes and differences, but under certain circumstances self-praise is expedient and necessary, and conducive to the glory of God, if the motive is “the defence of the Gospel,” rather than a mere personal clearing of the individual from aspersion or suspicion. It is generally foolish and always painful to one who is right-minded to boast or speak of his own virtues; and if it is necessary to do this, from a point of duty, one should beg the hearers to “suffer” or bear with him in his “folly,” which circumstances compel him to give way to.

II.—The Apostle does not “glory” in his works, or miracles, or wisdom, or in what he has done, but what he suffered—his “infirmities”—the reproaches, insults, ignominies, distresses, which were the seal of the Lord, the mark of the Man of Sorrows who “came to His own and His own received Him not,” and because God was glorified by the wonderful results of the ministry of one so despised of men as St. Paul—a proof that the Gospel which he preached was not of man but of God. The picture here presented of priceless, historical and spiritual value. The double lesson: i. The

Christian soldier must be prepared to endure hardness. ii. Self-renunciation a possibility for all by the grace of God.

III.—We have here only an account of the life of one of the Apostolic body, but from this record we may learn what the Apostles and early teachers of the Faith had to endure as a rule. The individual sacrifice and daily self-crucifixion of the pioneers of Christianity. Every wave of advance upon the realm of darkness marked by pain and stern self-forgetfulness, and death. The royal road of the Cross. “By His stripes we are healed.” By the agonies and endurance of the Apostolic order the world was brought out of darkness into light. The same rule holds good to-day. The measure of the self-denial of the members of “the body” is the measure of her power to conquer the forces of evil. To deliver men, the Church in her ministry and people must die to the world, its joys, comforts, attractions. It is not enough to assert our ancient lineage—that we are baptized members of the Catholic Church. St. Paul was a Hebrew—an Israelite—a son of Abraham. This was not to be forgotten. But he dwells upon the “labours,” not the earthly advantages he enjoyed, but the proof which he could show to be reckoned an Apostle “called of Jesus Christ by the Will of God,” I Cor. 1, 1. But to suffering for the cause of the Gospel was added “the care of the Churches.” The hardness of his life did not exempt him, in his own mind, from a faithful discharge of duty to those whose spiritual head he was. Amid such outward surroundings—“stripes,” “prisons,” “shipwreck,” “robbers,” “false brethren,” “hunger, thirst,” “cold and nakedness,” “the things,” as he describes them, with his ready pen, “that are without.” The strength of spiritual discipline, the perfection of spiritual character enabled him to keep these things “without,” that is making them subservient to and secondary as regards his real life and mission. Casting all his care upon God, for life or death, he never faltered in the discharge of those obligations which his position as Father of the Churches entailed upon him.

IV.—How full of rebuke is this passage of the lack of Christian asceticism in our own day. The example of the Apostle is one for laity and clergy to lay close to their hearts. How deeply the Apostle felt the value of souls, and how strong his conviction of the efficacy of the Gospel message to heal the hurt of the world, are shown in this perfect sacrifice of self. “Love is stronger than death.” “Perfect love casteth out fear,” I St. John iv, 18, et sq. A healthy, wholesome Christianity the outcome of a stern, simple, hard self-discipline. There is also a source of spiritual power and clearness of spiritual vision. Note, i. The suffering, self-sacrificing Apostle, the chiefest of the Apostles in power, dignity, knowledge of spiritual things, ii. Hardness of outward surroundings incentive to faithfulness in duty. iii. The sufferings of the Apostle did not make him selfish or indifferent to the condition of others. His ready sympathy flowed out as a stream to those who were “weak,” or tempted. To the weak he became as weak, I Cor. ix, 22. Who has a stumbling block thrown in his way (e.g., by the false teachers and maligners of my authority), and “I am not immediately fired with indignation at this outrage upon one of Christ's little ones.” iv. The solemn appeal to God to bear witness to the truths of the words he had written. The turning of the soul inward upon God. Such is the refuge of the faithful servant in every age. God grant of His mercy that we may each, in our various callings, be thus able to enjoy a like assurance in every time of trouble and perplexity.

## THE CHURCH SHOULD EDUCATE HER YOUNG.

I believe the future possibilities of our Church in this country are very great, if we can only manage to be tolerant of one another, and improve the opportunities which are opening up before us. A free Church in a free State should be able to deserve and to win success. But while with us the State knows no creed or sect before another, ignoring all, and protecting all alike in their civil rights, as a matter of fact it has come to pass that the State does claim and exercise the right of controlling the education of the children. Taxes are levied and collected, expensive school buildings are erected with the public money, private enterprise is driven from the field of competition, and the free schools have become practically a monopoly. Whether rightly or wrongfully, there is, I apprehend, growing dissatisfaction in the minds of many with a state of things which is felt to be anomalous. None will question the right of the State to see to it that its citizens, who are to make and administer the laws, are intelligent. Education is far better than ignorance. But there are not a few who challenge the right of the State, or any civil power, to so utterly divorce religion from learning that even the reading of a chapter from the Word of God is forbidden, as in certain of our schools. This is but one result, I fear, of our unhappy divisions, and of strifes and contentions among those who profess and call themselves Christians. But is it right for the Church to stand idle and entrust the education of her children to any other agency? The Sunday-school, it is claimed, must provide for the training of the children “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” But who does not know perfectly well that the Sunday-school, admirably as it may be conducted and organized, is unequal to the task thus laid upon it?

The hour on the Lord's day sometimes spent in dawdling over a lesson, and sometimes well employed, is as nothing compared with the solid week-day work and drill. The home training, indeed, might and ought to supply the deficiency, but in too many of our homes religion is as much ignored and as little thought of as in our secular schools. And in those that are not so utterly godless too often the work and responsibility of the parents is relegated to the Sunday-school teacher, who may himself be ill-prepared for doing rightly so important a duty. Hence, with no wish to undervalue or depreciate the experiment in education which is now being tried on so large a scale, I do maintain that our Church ought to see to it, and speedily too, that not one of the least of her little ones perish spiritually, through her indolence or lack of faithfulness in caring for their souls.

The training of the intellect is not enough, and that hardly deserves the name of education which omits the Law of God, and only dares to speak the name of Christ with bated breath, for fear of giving offence. If the best men of the community, men chosen for their worth and fitness, were put in control of our public education, I should have more hope of its efficiency and success. But it is often the low, intriguing politician, who has some selfish end to accomplish in dispensing patronage, and who, by the votes of a constituency as ignorant as himself, controls the action of the school board and expends the public money.

To my mind, the safest remedy would be a return to the old methods of the parish school, where the children of rich and poor might daily be taught the Catechism, as well as the spelling book and the grammar, and where the Book of God would not appear as an intruder. This would involve an additional expense in the