

The Church Times.

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"Evangelical Truth--Apostolic Order."

W. Gossip---Publisher

VOL. VI. HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 1859. NO. 9.

Calendar.

CALENDAR WITH LESSONS.

Day & date		MORNING	EVENING
S. Feb. 27.	Sunday in Lent.	Gen. 39 Luke 10	Gen. 42 Eph. 4
M. " 28.		Deut. 11	Deut. 12
T. March 1.		16	17
W. " 2.		17	18
Th. " 3.		19	20
F. " 4.		21	22
S. " 5.		24	25

Poetry.

BRING BACK MY FLOWERS.

"Bring back my flowers," said a rosy child,
As she played by the streamlet's side,
And cast down wreaths of the flow'ers wild,
On the ever hurrying tide.
But the stream flowed on, and her treasures bore
To the far off sparkling sea,
To return to the place of their birth no more,
Though she cried "Come back to me!
Ye fairest gems of these forest bowers,
Oh stream, bright stream, bring back my flowers."

"Bring back my flowers," said a noble youth,
As he mournfully stood alone,
And sadly thought on the broken truth
Of a heart that was once his own.—
Of a light that shone on his life's young day
As brilliant as man o'er knew,
Of a love that his reason had led astray,
And to him was no longer true.
"Return" he said, "Life's brightest hours,
Oh stream of Time, bring back my flowers."

"Bring back my flowers," a mother sighed,
O'er the grave where her infant slept,
And where in her stubbornness and pride,
She, her tearful vigil kept,
"Oh why does the cruel hand of death,
Seek victims so fair as she,
Oh why are the loved ones of others left,
While mine is snatched from me?
Who gave to thee Death, such cruel powers,
Oh grave dark grave! bring back my flowers!"

"Bring back my flowers," said a grey haired man,
For the friends of his youth were fled,
And those he had loved and cherished most,
Were slumbering with the dead;
But a faith in his God still cheered him on
Though the present was dark and drear;
For he knew that in Heaven he would meet again
The friends upon earth so dear.
"Come Death," he cried, "for in Eden's bowers,
Our God will restore our long lost flowers."

Religious Miscellany.

SHROVE TUESDAY.

THE Tuesday after Quinquagesima-Sunday is generally called Shrove-Tuesday: a name given it from the old Saxon words *Shrive*, *Shrift*, or *Shrove*, which in that language signifies to confess; it being a constant custom amongst the Roman Catholics to confess their sins on that day, in order to receive the blessed Sacrament and therefore qualify themselves for a more religious observation of the holy time of Lent immediately ensuing. But this in process of time was turned into a custom of invitations, and their taking their leave of flesh and other dainties; and afterwards by degrees, into sports and merriments, which still in that Church make up the whole business of the Carnival.

LENT.

Though it ought to be the constant endeavor of a Christian to observe his duty at all times, and to have always a great regard to what God requires of him; yet considering the great corruption of the world, and the frailty of our nature, and how often we transgress the bounds of our duty, and how backward we are to cross our fleshly appetites, it is very expedient that we should have some solemn season appointed for examining our lives, and the exercise of repentance.

And accordingly we find that from the very first ages of Christianity, it was customary for the Christians to set apart some time for mortification and self-denial, to prepare themselves for the feast of Easter. Irenæus, who lived but ninety years from the death of St. John, and conversed familiarly with St. Polycarp, as Poly-

carp had with St. John, has happened to let us know, though incidentally, that as it was observed in his time so it was in that of his predecessors.*

As to its original, the Lord Bishop of Bath and Wells, in his learned *Discourse concerning Lent*, has showed, by very probable arguments, that the Christian Lent took its rise from the Jewish preparation for their yearly expiation. He likewise proves out of their own writers, that the Jews began their solemn humiliation forty days before the expiation. Wherefore the primitive Christians, following their example, set up this fast at the beginning of Christianity, as a proper preparative for the commemoration of the great expiation of the sins of the whole world.

The number of forty days seems very generally to have been appropriated to repentance and humiliation. For not to reckon up the forty days in which God drowned the world, or the forty years in which the children of Israel did penance in the wilderness, or the forty stripes by which malefactors were to be corrected; whoever considers that Moses did, not only once, fast this number of days, that Elias also fasted in the wilderness the same space of time, that the Ninevites had precisely as many days allowed for their repentance, and that our blessed Saviour himself, when he was pleased to fast, observed the same length of time; whoever, I say, considers these things, cannot but think that this number of days is very suitable to extraordinary humiliation.

It receives its name from the time of the year where-in it is observed; *Lent* in the old Saxon language signifying *Spring*, being now used to signify this Spring fast, which always begins so that it may end at Easter; to remind us of our Saviour's sufferings, which ended at his Resurrection.

During this whole season, the Primitive Christians used to give the most public testimonies of sorrow and repentance, and to show the greatest signs of humiliation that can be imagined: no marriages were allowed of, nor anything that might give the least occasion to mirth or cheerfulness.

Nor was the demeanor of the primitive Christians at home less strict and austere than their discipline at church; they lay in sackcloth and ashes, and took no care of their garb or dress; they used no other food but what was necessary to preserve life; some abstaining from flesh and wine; others especially the Greeks, forbearing all fish likewise as well as flesh: some contented themselves with eggs and fruits; others forebore both, and lived upon bread, herbs, and roots: but all agreed in this, viz. that whereas at other seasons their fasts continued but till three in the afternoon, they would not on any day in Lent eat till the evening, and then such food as was least delicate.

A SPIRITUAL MIND, AND THE HABIT OF FERVENT AND CONTINUAL PRAYER.

A SPIRITUAL mind ought to be a distinguishing characteristic of every minister of Christ. This is essential to give life and power to his ministrations. Without it, all his duty will be performed in a perfunctory manner; there will be no "unction from the Holy One," either in his public discourses or his private conversation. In order that his speech and his preaching may be "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power," he must have his "conversation in Heaven;" his affections must be set "on things above, and not on things on the earth;" his life must be a life of faith in the Son of God.

Lastly a minister of Christ must possess the habit of fervent and continual prayer. He must be pre-eminently a man of prayer. He must pray for the influence of the Holy Spirit upon his own heart and understanding, that he may have a "mind and will" to the fulfilment of his office, and that he may know how to behave himself in the house of God; and he must pray for the influence of the same Spirit upon the hearts and understandings of his people, that they may receive the "love of the truth," and may "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful of every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God."

* Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 5. c. 24. p. 12. D.

A minister of Christ ought to do nothing without prayer. In his closet, before the composition of a sermon and in the pulpit before its delivery, he should never omit to ask for the help of the Holy Spirit. When he is going to conduct a parochial meeting, or to make a pastoral visit, he should always entreat of the Lord to be with him and bless him. He should enter into no company without asking for grace to glorify his God and Saviour in it. He should comment on no undertaking without praying that it may be begun, continued, and ended in the Lord. He should likewise continually cry unto the Lord for a blessing upon all his institutions and all the means of grace; and for the outpouring of His Holy Spirit upon all classes of his people, his communicants, his congregation, the children of his schools, and all who are placed under his spiritual charge. Thus, and thus only, can a minister go forth to his various duties, in the confidence that the Lord will be with him, and manifest the favor of His knowledge by him in every place. Thus only can we look forward with an assured hope that he shall finish his course with joy, and the ministry which he has received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel, of the grace of God.

CATHEDRALS.

It appears by a paragraph in one of the New York daily papers, that the matter of erecting a *Cathedral* Church is attracting the attention of some of the churchmen of that city. Those who contribute to build Cathedrals and other large and expensive churches, are not always among the number who are foremost, by their labors and charities, in the work of erecting plain but comfortable churches and chapels, in the darker and more neglected parts of the world. If those whom God has made his stewards, by entrusting them with His goods for a season, will not give at all, unless it be for the erection of costly edifices, such as are to be found in some of our larger cities, then it is well to encourage the building of magnificent Christian temples; but if a half a million of dollars for such a purpose is to be withdrawn from those who would otherwise have contributed this sum in aiding the spread of the Gospel in destitute places, and in assisting to build plain but substantial sanctuaries for those who must worship in uncomfortable and unconsecrated places all their days, unless their more favored brethren show their love for them, by helping them to build a church; then, we have no hesitation in saying that our duty to the Church and to the world requires us, more clearly, in this land and in this age, to build, as yet, to meet the spiritual wants of perishing sinners, rather than to gratify the tastes of refined Christians.

The time may come when the tide of emigration shall reach its flood-mark in this country—when the character of the people shall be no longer in the quick state of a fearful formation—when everything in morals, politics and religion, shall not be, as now, in that plastic condition, wherein it is moulded, with frightful facility, into the adamant form of a fixed destiny—when every neighborhood will have a church—when there are no new settlements—no "Far West"—when all are able and disposed to take care of their spiritual wants, with the same regularity as they attend to their worldly affairs—then, in such a state of society, it may be profitable to spend a million for a Temple.

If our branch of the Holy Catholic Church is to do "its work, its great work," and thereby successfully answer its glorious mission, then no time is to be lost. Every soldier and servant in our pale, whether he be Bishop, Priest, or Deacon, "must arise and put his armor on." We want keen and strong blades; we want the armor that God has fashioned for His work; we want the whole of it, and we want it bright and strong. It is no time for finical ornaments. We shall soon have occasion to employ the strongest and the best we have in real service. If infidelity and heresy, in all their shapes, are to be met and driven out of the land, then Christian laymen and Christian clergymen will have something to do which will allow them but little time for any employments which do not belong to the work of planting the Cross and defending it, with all the ghostly power which God has given them. There