

The Church Guardian

—: EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR:—

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P. O. Box 1968. For Business Announce-
ments See page 15.

CALENDAR FOR APRIL.

- APRIL 1—1st Sunday after Easter.
“ 8—2nd Sunday after Easter.
“ 15—3rd Sunday after Easter.
“ 22—4th Sunday after Easter. [Notice of
St. Mark.]
“ 25—ST. MARK. Ev. and Martyr.
“ 29—5th Sunday after Easter. [Notice of
St. Philip and St. James; Roga-
tion Days, and Ascension Day.]
“ 30—Rogation Day.

NOTES ON THE EPISTLES.

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FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

“Doers of the Word.”—St. James I, 22.

I.—The Epistle adds something to the truths taught in the Epistle for the preceding Sunday : i. As to the fullness of God's grace. ii. The opening of the soul to receive it. iii. The lesson of practical co-operation with the grace so given and received. Religion is received to no purpose unless it makes a man different from what he would be without it; both as to what he does, and why he does it. To hear and profess to believe, by a formal recital of the Creeds, and an outward conformity to Church rules and life, and not be “doers of the Word,” is to deceive self in the worst of ways. The Word of God is a mirror in which one may see oneself. It shows man what he really is, not in outward appearance, but as to the real character of the inward soul. It enables us to know ourselves in all our sinfulness of nature and practice, by showing us the perfections of God and of His Holy Law. Into this mirror we cannot look too closely or too constantly. To know ourselves is the foundation of humility, and the only way to acquire this self-knowledge is constantly to behold ourselves in the mirror of God's Word. We must not be casual users of the Word, but “continue” looking into it, so as not to be “forgetful” beholders of what it exhibits to us. After beholding our defects in the mirror of God's Holy Word, we should at once resolve to be “doers of the Word”—doers of the work, the work of preparing for eternity.

II.—The thoughtless hearer is as one who glances aside into a mirror and straightway forgets what manner of man he was. The light and superficial study of Holy Scripture is here deprecated. The “doer of the Word” is blessed in his deed. The careless “hearer” is grasping at shadows. His “religion is vain.” The one finds fruit in his labour; as there is a difference in point of conduct, so is there a difference in the effect produced. The work of which we must thus be “doers” is, in brief, “the work of holiness; but the Apostle in this passage, as is his custom, deals with particulars rather than contenting himself with general statements. There must be a deepening effect of steadfast

practice under the Christian law of liberty, and then will follow a consequent reality of spiritual blessing.

III.—Passing to particular examples, the Epistles dwell upon : [a] control of the tongue; [b] kindness to the suffering; [c] purity from worldliness; as some of the marks of a practical, solid reality in the religious life. Self-restraint—Love—Consecration. The three-fold cord which is not quickly broken. “Bridle the tongue”—“the unruly evil,” chap. iii, 8. Profane use of the sacred Name, which angels ever adore and mention with reverence. Foolish conversation. Disrespectful words of and towards superiors. Speaking evil of dignities in Church and State. Gossip, ill-natured banter, scandal, false teaching, big-swalling words for the mere sake of effect,—these are some of the signs of an unruly, unbridled speech. “To visit the fatherless” covers all duties of Christian charity and benevolence. It is a call to a recognition by us of the Brotherhood, the one body in Christ. “To weep with those who weep, to rejoice with those who rejoice” not a sentiment, but a rule of life for Christian men; a practical demonstration of the “mind of Christ” Who bore our sins and carried our sorrows, Is. liii. Religion enables us to do our duty to God and man: helps us to “do good” and to “distribute.” The Christian seeks out his brother in trouble; he leads him to the source of true comfort for the “Lord's sake.” Christian charity is not organized into societies or administered by Boards or Committees. It is a personal exercise of love from one member of the Church towards another. It is not a seeker after returns, or thanks, or even fruits; it is as large as the Love of God, and embraces the unworthy as well as the worthy. It does not discriminate over much. It only asks whether the brother or sister are in “need,” not whether they “deserve.” The Poor Law only a feeble substitute for the charity of Christian men.

IV.—“To keep himself unspotted from the world”—unspotted by the vices, untainted by the temper, the false maxims, the expediency, the caution, the selfishness of “the world.” The world does not love sorrow, or poverty, or simplicity and purity of life. It seeks what is prosperous and gay and mirth-giving. To be “unspotted” by the world is to see things far otherwise than as the world sees them. To look with the “mind of Christ” on all created things. To love what He loved, to despise what He passed by as vain. The restraint of the Christian Life is “liberty,”—true freedom “a law of liberty,” because it delivers from wrong views of Life, evil habits, the strength of evil passions, and brings us into “the glorious liberty of the sons of God,” Rom. viii, 21. It allows every faculty of mind and body to have free exercise in God's service. “Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked thing in me, and lead me in the way everlasting,” Ps. lxxxix, 23, 24.

THE SECRET OF WORSHIP.

The secret of public worship regarded religiously, is that it is a coming into the presence of God, not into the presence of man. It is God and man uniting themselves in holy fellowship. Regarded as philosophical and educative, it is following such an *outward habit* as will in time favor *internal habits* and disposition. We do not come to worship because we feel thus and thus, but we come so that in time we may get the proper feeling. Coming together and starting on the mere level of custom, we soon feel the stirring of the wings of devotion and begin to rise heavenward on the pinions of prayer, praise and sacramental observance. What a

grand protest against the fluctuating, uncertain and sensational habits of worship of these times, is the worship in those noble cathedrals and hoary churches of England. To one who goes for the first time from many of the bare and simple American churches, with platforms for pulpits and operatic stars for music, into an English cathedral, such as York or Westminster, and encounters its elaborate ritual repeated twice a day, it seems the veriest form, perhaps a thing that addresses only the senses. But study the system and you will find wisdom in it. The daily worship has been a tremendous force in the development of English character and English virtues. It has been a great conservator of all for which religion stands. It has purified politics, nourished letters and learning, developed art, fostered domestic virtues. It has been a worthy environment for the public faith. It has been a measureless force in all directions. “Happy are the people that are in such a case.”—*Spokane Churchman*.

OUR LORD'S APPEARANCES.

The evidential aspect of these appearances, “He showed Himself alive by many infallible proofs.” We cannot insist too strongly upon the importance of this view of the subject. The Resurrection is the keystone of the arch of the evidence of Christ's character and mission. He has thrice over, when asked by the Jews for a sign from heaven to attest His claims, given them this sign, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. . . . He spoke of the temple of his body,” (John ii, 19-21); “There shall no sign be given you but the sign of the prophet Jonas; for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whales' belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth,” (Matt. xii, 40; xiv, 4). He had given the same assurance to His disciples: “From that time,” viz., of Peter's confession of His divinity, “began Jesus to show unto his disciples how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the chief priests and elders and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day,” (Matt. xvi, 21; also xvii, 23, and xx, 19); for He said, “I have power to lay down my life and I have power to take it again,” (John x, 18).

Had He not risen again, we would have heard nothing more of Jesus of Nazareth. His rising again, as he said, proved that He was what He professed to be,—God Incarnate, Emmanuel, God with us; that His death had been not a triumph of His enemies, but the voluntary Sacrifice of the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world; that He was master of death and the grave.

Let us then briefly summarise the evidence of the Resurrection. And first, let us glance at the fact that our Lord was indeed mortal man, flesh of our flesh, bone of our bone. He was born of a human mother, and received nourishment at her breast. He increased in stature and wisdom and grace, i.e., He grew, physically, mentally, spiritually, like other children. Again, after the age of childhood, it is repeated that He grew into manhood, growing in favor with God and man. He lived the ordinary life of men for thirty years; for three years, indeed, He led an extraordinary life, as Rabbi, Prophet, worker of miracles, but it was of the life of these three years that we are told how He hungered and thirsted, and ate and drank, and was weary and rested and slept, was moved with compassion, and anger, sorrow and dread, and wept and prayed,—how at last He suffered physical, mental and spiritual agony, and gave up the ghost and died. For thirty years and more there was nothing about Him, His appearance, His mode of life, which made those who knew Him suspect for a moment that He was