

# The Church Guardian

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## Special Notice.

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nience. The LABEL gives the date of ex-  
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## CALENDAR FOR MARCH.

MARCH 2	} EMBER DAYS.
" 4	
" 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.

## THOUGHTS FOR HOLY WEEK.

### THE POWER OF SUFFERING.

By the Bishop of Truro.

If we try to think what part of our Lord's Life it is that has influenced us, and influenced the future of His Church, the most, we shall find that it is not so much what He did as what He suffered.

From the pierced Side came the Blood and Water, for the healing of Humanity. When He was well and strong, in the human sense, He healed the sick and worked miracles; but the power of His life was in His suffering and dying.

One new thought which Christianity has brought into the world is this: the strange power that there is in suffering.

It almost seems as if the members of Christ's Body are to do yet more through their suffering, than through all their energising; as if—we would say it reverently—through the wounds of the members, as well as of the Head, life is to flow out!

In some ways we can easily understand the use of suffering: (1) to remind us of sin; (2) to discipline us; (3) to manifest the power of the Holy Ghost in supporting us; (4) to unite us more closely to Christ; (5) to develop our sympathy and love; (6) to train us for helping others.

But it appears as if it were yet more than this. St. Paul speaks as if he felt that he had to "fill up" his part of something that still had to be supplied, in "the afflictions of Christ!" (Col. i, 24.) It seems as if, in some mysterious way, the great work that Christ had to accomplish, with all its mysterious influence on worlds unknown to us, as if all the benefits of Christ's "full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice" could not be received by His Church, till the wounds in our hands were so made, that healing could flow from them!

How wonderful it is, as years roll on, to watch the results of the prayers offered in faith, without feeling, by some one too weak in body and in soul to do more than say: "O God, remember the covenant which Thou has made

through Jesus Christ, my Lord! I pray in the Name of Thy Son Jesus Christ."

O the force of those hours when we are too exhausted to work, too dark and lifeless to realise anything! O the power of such times, not only on our own life, and on the education of the holy Angels, but in fulfilling His work! The idea seem too great for us to grasp.

What hinders us in grasping it is this thought: "Yes, but Jesus Christ was without sin and I am full of sin. How can I know that I am linked with Christ, in this suffering? Perhaps I am not bearing my cross—i. e., the daily cross in little things—in a right way?" Satan says: "If you were pure and holy, then you might perhaps feel that you were helping in the great work; but how can you feel this, when you are so sinful, sinking beneath your cross?"

There is deep teaching for us in that story recorded by St. John, where we read of Christ washing His disciples' feet. They could not bear to see Christ humbled; it perplexed them. But He answered: "What I do, thou knowest not now, we see that the most glorious part of His work on earth was His humiliation!"

And in like manner there is a something in the humiliations which we receive from the assaults of Satan, from the hard and unloving world, and from our lower self rising up again and again, and even conquering us—there is a something in all this, which humbly borne, in darkness and in weariness, simply clinging to our Lord, may be working out untold blessings for mankind.

But, be that as it may, we are never so near to our Lord, as when He seems far away; when we are perplexed; when the old passages of the Bible have no meaning for us; when the old prayer brings no comfort; when our only language is the cry of Gethsemane: "O my Father if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;" or the cry from out of the darkness of Cavalry: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

O dear people, drink in—during this Holy Week—drink in strength for any dark days that may be coming: Try to grasp new thought; write down this Holy Week, thoughts that may come back to you when no human presence can help. Learn, so as never yet you have learned how weakness and exhaustion—aye, even defeat—bring us nearer to Him, who, for our sake, came to be "despised and rejected of men," the "Man of Sorrows;" and from whose sufferings and death flows out the Stream of Life in which our souls are healed.

AMONG all the deadly sorrows of His most bitter Passion, this, even this, seemeth to be the greatest of all, and that which did most affect Him, even the grief of the slender reckoning most men have it in, as if He had done or suffered nothing at all for them. For lo! of all the sharp pains He complaineth not, but of this He complaineth; of no regard; that which grieveth Him most, that which most He moaneth is this. As if He said, "All that I suffer, I suffer willingly, if this I may find at your hands, regard." And indeed the pain of the body is but the body of pain; the very soul of sorrow and pain is the soul's sorrow and pain. By Thine unknown sorrows and sufferings, have mercy upon us and save us.—Bishop Andrewes.

## THE THINGS DONE, AND THOSE LEFT UNDONE.

St. Paul classifies sins into two chief kinds: Those which "are open before-hand, going before to judgment," and those which "follow after." The one class of sins is committed with foresight of consequences, with conscious choice and fixed intention to break the law. The other class is committed in ignorance of conse-

quences, or, at least, with the expectation of keeping within the terms of the law. In the main, this distinction is that between the violation of a known moral precept or prohibition, and the neglect of a known positive religious precept; or, in other phrase, between commission and omission.

These are the two common kinds of besetting sins. One consisting of positive, open violations of what is known, or may be known to be right, and because scandalous, these sins bring reproach upon the church; the other, characterized by neglects of positive precepts, inconspicuous and occasioning no scandal. Let a Christian break one of the ten commandments by some act of fraud, violence or lust, the whole community is scandalized, and rightly so. But let him habitually absent himself from the Holy Communion, and none will be scandalized by the neglect. Very few, indeed, will think it much of a sin, because it is not the breaking of a moral precept, the reasonableness and the value of which all may see, but it is a breach of the arbitrary precept, "Do this in remembrance of me," for which no reason is advanced by its Author, and, on that account, obedience to the precept is a matter of faith, and not of foresight.

Public opinion is notoriously lenient to sins of omission. Neglects of positive precepts and institutions of the Gospel of Christ are generally thought to be less heinous than acts of immortality. Until we think deeply into the matter, we are apt to think the guilt of some vice, as profanity, drunkenness, falsehood, licentiousness, hard bargains, sharp practices, mischief-making, tattling, foolish-speaking, and the like, are worse than neglect of the Lord's Day, neglect of the Bible, neglect of the Sacraments, neglect of private prayer and public worship. Yet there is not the least ground in reason, nor in the nature of the case, nor in Holy Scripture, nor in the doctrines of the Church, for any such leniency toward sins of neglect and indifference. Rightly viewed, there are no worse sins than that of neglecting the positive institutions of the Church of God. Bad as sins against our fellow-men confessedly are, dare we take the ground that, either in present guilt or ultimate consequence, they are worse than sins against God? Will it be said that to steal a dollar from one's neighbor is worse than to rob God of His Holy Day and appropriate it to one's own pleasure? Will any one maintain that drunkenness is worse than neglect of prayer? Or that adultery is worse than to turn the back on the Feast of the Altar?

What is drunkenness? It is an insult to God—an outrage committed on that humanity moulded after the Divine image. What is the neglect of prayer? It is rebellion: it is the offspring of self-sufficiency, an assertion of independence on God. What is adultery in its consequences? It is suicide of the soul. And what is it habitually to neglect to participate in the Holy Communion? It is self-procured starvation of soul. Let none be deluded into the notion that neglect of a religious obligation or spiritual provision, is of less serious consequence than an act of moral wrong. The moral and the spiritual are parts of a whole; one in origin, and one in end. And so it must be at least as bad—not to say worse—certainly as bad in itself, and as bad in its consequences, to leave that undone which we ought to have done, as it is to do those things which we ought not to do.—The Church Helper.

## QUESTIONS FOR LENT.

God calls me.—Am I listening?  
Am I caring for my soul?  
Am I helping or hindering others in their spiritual life?  
What think I of Christ?  
Do I leave God out of my life?  
Whither does my present course of life lead?  
Am I a backslider?