

The Anglican Tradition

A Journal of Theology and Devotion

"The eye has not seen the like, the ear has not heard the like, the heart of man cannot conceive the treasures and pleasures of his kingdom, which is now at hand, to such as repent, that is, to such as are sorry for their sins, believe in God's mercy through Christ, and earnestly purpose to lead a new life. The God of mercy, through Christ his Son, grant us his Holy Spirit, and work in our hearts this sorrow, faith, and new life, which through his grace I have spoken of, both now and for ever. Amen." John Bradford (1515-1555)

Our Lenten Issue

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The Rev. Dr. S. Randall Toms

A ministry of St. Paul's Reformed Episcopal Church in Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Our Publisher



St. Paul's Church



St. Paul's Reformed Episcopal Church in Baton Rouge, LA is a member of the Reformed Episcopal Church in the United States. Amid growing concerns that the Protestant Episcopal Church was departing from some of the foundational principles of the English Reformation, a group led by The Rt. Rev'd George David Cummins, D.D., a duly consecrated bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church, formed this new denomination (though not a new church) in New York City on December 2, 1873. The Reformed Episcopal Church has maintained a continuous existence for over 130 years during which it has maintained Biblical orthodoxy while upholding both Evangelical Truth and Apostolic Order. For more information concerning the history and mission of the REC, visit www.recus.org.

The mission of St. Paul's Church is to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, to reverently worship God and to love others as God loved us. We do this through Scriptural preaching and Sacramental worship in the tradition of the English Reformation and the use of the 1928 Book of Common Prayer.

St. Paul's strives to balance the beauty of a high, liturgical reverential worship with expository preaching and a vibrant congregational life. Our other ministries include weekly Holy Communion services, men's fellowships and Bible studies, altar and acolyte ministries, women's fellowship, fellowships for our children, Morning Prayer, congregational breakfasts, book publishing and pastoral services. If you are in the Baton Rouge area, come visit us. Please visit our website at stpaulsbr@aol.com.

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Welcome to Our Journal



Welcome to the first issue of *The Anglican Tradition*. This journal is devoted to advancing a distinctively Episcopal approach to the study of Scripture, Church history, theology, worship, and cultural issues. The editors of this journal are committed to a conservative, Anglican

interpretation of Scripture and approach to Church teaching as summarized in the Thirty-Nine Articles, the Apostles Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed. We especially hope to emphasize the importance and necessity of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.

One of the primary goals of this journal will be to revive an interest in true churchmanship.

Since there were several articles and excerpts with a Lenten theme available from *Project Canterbury* (www.anglicanhistory.org), we decided that in this first issue we would make some of that information available in this hard copy format for ease of reading and meditation purposes. We hope this edition will help you to observe a Holy Lent, and that you find good resources within our journal.

As you think about the observation of Lent, remember the words of the Prayer Book on page li that Lent is one of those times classified as

“OTHER DAYS OF FASTING, ON WHICH THE CHURCH REQUIRES SUCH A MEASURE OF ABSTINENCE AS IS MORE ESPECIALLY SUITED TO EXTRAORDINARY ACTS AND EXERCISES OF DEVOTION.”

It is important to realize that throughout the Church year, throughout our very lives, we are called

upon to exercise abstinence. The Christian is to abstain from every appearance of evil. The Christian is called upon daily to deny himself, take up the cross and follow Christ. Lent is not the only time that we deny ourselves. The very mark of the disciple of Jesus Christ is that he denies himself.

But during Lent, we practice *extraordinary* acts and exercises of devotion. Our typical acts of devotion seem a little trifling when we think of the word “extraordinary.” We give up something like chocolate or soft drinks, and while such sacrifices may be extraordinary acts of devotion for some of us, I doubt that form of self-denial is what our forefathers had in mind for this season of the year. All of the Christian life is to be characterized by self-denial, but during Lent, we make the extra effort to go above and beyond the call of duty.

The kind of Christianity that we live now is a stranger to *extraordinary* acts and exercises of devotion, because our lives are not characterized by even *ordinary* acts of abstinence and devotion. Maybe during this Lent, we should spend the 40 days repenting of our lack of the normal, every day discipline of the Christian life. This year, when you make a minor sacrifice in order that you might focus your mind on repentance and the sufferings of Jesus Christ, remember, that these actions are just a small token of the total, self-denying discipline required of the disciple of Jesus Christ.

It is our prayer that this journal may help you in that quest for a disciplined Christian life.

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The Rev. Dr. S. Randall Toms is the Vicar of St. Paul's Reformed Episcopal Church. With over 30 years of pastoral experience, he has served several congregations in Louisiana. He holds a B. A. from Louisiana Tech University, a Master of Divinity from the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, and a Ph.D. in English from Louisiana State University. His doctoral dissertation, *Ambivalent Idylls*, compared the novels of Ellen Glasgow, William Faulkner, and Thomas Hardy. He and his wife, Bettyna, have one daughter, Rebekah, and two grandchildren, Rachel and Bobby.

Why Should We Fast and Weep?

A Sermon by the Rev. Dr. S. Randall Toms
Vicar of St. Paul's Reformed Episcopal Church, Baton Rouge, Louisiana (2005)

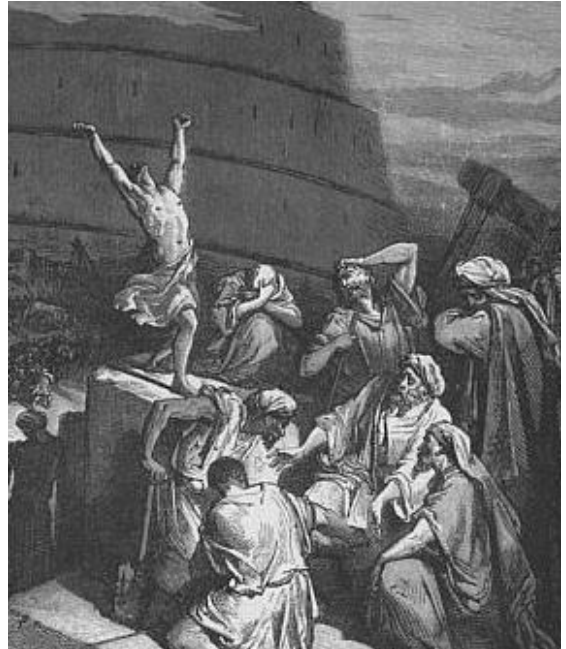
Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; even a meat offering and a drink offering unto the LORD your God? Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. Let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God? Then will the LORD be jealous for his land, and pity his people. Yea, the LORD will answer and say unto his people, Behold, I will send you corn, and wine, and oil, and ye shall be satisfied therewith: and I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen:

Joel 2:12-19

One of the dangers of having been in the ministry for over 30 years is that one develops a kind of pessimism that sees the dark side of things. What I am about to say may seem bleak, but we often need such solemn thoughts and reminders during the season of Lent.

Our Anglican forefathers deemed that a passage from Joel 2 would be an appropriate Scripture reading for Ash Wednesday throughout our history. In this chapter, the people of God are told to turn to God with fasting, weeping, and mourning. The people are admonished to rend their hearts, sanctify a fast, and call a solemn assembly. Even the priests are commanded to weep between the porch and the altar. Is it appropriate for the Church to perform these actions every Ash Wednesday throughout its history? Our forefathers believed that this would be an appropriate Scripture for the Church during this season, because there will always be need for desperate repentance. Certainly, there has never been a time when it has been more appropriate than this hour. For what reasons should we weep, mourn, and fast during this season of Lent?

As we look at our nation and the whole world, we find abundant matters for weeping, mourning, and fasting, but in Joel 2, the Lord is calling upon the people of God to repent. Though our nation and world compel our tears, we should begin our weeping and fasting because of the current condition of the Church.



God's Judgments

In the prophet Joel's time, God had judged his people by sending upon them a plague of locusts. God was warning his people that this judgment was just a prelude to more serious judgment to come in the days ahead. Thus, the people were to mourn for what they had lost. As we contemplate those things that should cause us to weep, mourn, and fast, chief on our list should be the loss of many of God's blessings. Also, the Church should weep that it has been given over as a reproach. In the book of Joel, the priests are to wail, "Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach." In my lifetime, there has never been a period when the world had more reason, and I would say, good reason, to hold the Church in contempt. It is not surprising that the world looks at the Church and says, "Where is thy God?" It does seem obvious to me, that God has, in many respects, withdrawn the glory of his presence from among us. In the book of Ezekiel, the prophet describes how the glory of God gradually rose up from the holy place, and then, out of the temple. Has God's glory been removed from the Church in America? Is he threatening to remove our candlestick? The only people who cannot see that this danger hovers over us are the poor Christians in the pew who delude themselves into believing that we are actually experiencing some kind of spiritual revival.

But as we look around us, we see the Church has been given over to be a reproach. The Church, in many parts, has been given over to liberalism. So much of the Church that bears the name of Jesus Christ no longer believes that the Bible, all of it, is the inspired, infallible, word of God. So much of the Church no longer believes in the deity of Jesus Christ, his sinless life, the necessity of the atonement, and his bodily resurrection from the grave. The Church is a reproach because it no longer believes the gospel that it was commissioned to proclaim.

Ignorance and Frivolity

Where the Church has not been given over to liberalism, it has been given over to a mindless conservatism. It is sad to say, but most of the learning and scholarship takes place in the liberal wing of the Church by academicians. We desperately need the equivalents of St. Augustine and Thomas Aquinas—giant intellects who genuinely believe that the Bible is the word of God. In many conservative branches of the Church, ignorance reigns supreme, and is considered a virtue. We often hear statements such as, “Our preacher don’t have none of that there book learning, he just preaches the Bible.” Sadly, the scholar/pastor is almost a thing of the past, and the Church’s ministers and people are held up as a reproach because of their ignorance.

Where the conservative Church has not been given over to ignorance, it has been given over to silliness and emotionalism. In the last part of the 20th century, a wave of emotionalism, tintured with revivalism swept through the Church, and many people thought that this was a movement of the Holy Spirit. Suddenly, we were told that the day of miracles had returned, but the only ones who believed that announcement were Christians with an incredible gift of self-deception who desperately wanted to believe that God had visited his people. I wanted to believe it as well, but the people of the world, and most rational people knew that many of these so-called miracles bore little resemblance to those performed by Christ and his apostles. Worship in many conservative, evangelical churches is characterized by a frivolity that can only be described as embarrassing by anyone who has any idea of how people in the Scriptures behaved when they realized that they were in the presence of the Holy God. The frivolity and gullibility of the Church has made it a reproach.

Lack of Leaders

One of the sure signs that God has withdrawn many of his blessings from us is the absence of great spiritual leaders. I suppose that I read too many biographies, but as I look at the great pastors and theologians of the past, I have to conclude that God has judged his Church by taking away the true shepherds from among us. Listen to this description of John Henry Newman as he preached at Oxford:

The sermon began in a calm musical voice, the key slightly rising as it went on; by and by the preacher

warmed with his subject, till it seemed as if his very soul and body glowed with suppressed emotion. The very tones of his voice seemed as if they were not his own. There are those who to this day, in reading many of his sermons, have the whole scene brought back before them. The great church, the congregation all breathless with expectant attention, the gaslight just at the left hand of the pulpit, lowered that the preacher might not be dazzled: themselves, perhaps, standing in the half-darkness under the gallery, and the pause before those words in *The Ventures of Faith* thrilled through them, “They say unto Him, We are able.”

Very rarely, if at all, do we hear modern preachers and their preaching described in such terms. Where now is that man of God who holds the congregation in breathless expectation of his next sentence? It is to be feared that God has taken those men from us.

In the biography of an Orthodox priest, [Father Arseny, 1893-1973: Priest, Prisoner, and Spiritual Father](#), there is this description of this man who spent so many years in a Russian prison camp:

Father Arseny opened up a new life for me, he brought me to God, and he recreated my inner self. This is why now I want to say what is essential in him. One can talk about him endlessly, because his deeds have no limits, and these deeds boil down to God and love—the love he feels for people in the name of the Lord.... He gave away what was precious to him: the warmth of his soul, his faith, and his experience in living his faith. He taught us how to pray and transformed into fire the spark of God in each of us (pg. 132).

That portrayal depicts what the man of God should be. Many of us have never met anyone like that, and most of us will die without doing so. Instead of that glowing description of a holy man of God, what impression do people now have of the minister, the priest? He’s immoral, a sexual predator, just one of the guys, a swindler, a good old boy.” He’s everything except a holy man of God. Surely, the condition of the Christian ministry should cause all ministers and parishioners to weep before God, admit that even the ministry is a reproach, and beg God to restore the true man of God to His Church.

Few Conversions

Another sign that God has withdrawn his blessing from the Church is that we see so few conversions. The churches in America swap members, but by and large, we do not reach that section of the population called “the unchurched.” Even most of Billy Graham’s “converts” in America were already members of churches. Why is it that we see so few conversions? Is it that we don’t have enough churches? No, we have plenty of churches. We have enough churches to evangelize this entire nation. Do we need to get the word out more? Actually, most people in this country hear the word at some point. Do we need

more para-church organizations? There is no para-church organization that is doing something that the local church shouldn't be doing if the church was doing her duty. Then why do we see so few conversions? The problem is that the Holy Spirit is not attending with power the preaching of the word, because the sins of the Church have grieved the Holy Spirit of God. We should weep because the sins of the Church have defiled the temple of the Lord, and he has withdrawn his glory.

Failed Movements

I saw so many movements in the last part of the 20th century. I've seen a revival of the 1930's style fundamentalism. I've seen a revival of the Deeper Life movement. I've seen a revival of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movement. I've seen a revival of Reformed, Calvinistic theology. I've seen a growing interest in ancient liturgies. But, after having seen it all, been around it all, and even having been a part of most of these movements, I would have to say that they have not restored the godly, righteous, and sober life that God demands of his people. In some ways these movements have only brought more reproach on the church. By and large, these movements have not brought with them conviction of sin, humility, holiness of life, prayerfulness, or an overwhelming sense of the majestic holiness of God. These movements have failed to restore the most basic of all Christian virtues—love. When we look over that list of the characteristics of love in I Corinthians 13, we must ask ourselves, "Where does that kind of love exist?" Too often it seems that the last place you would find this kind of love is the only place where it could be found--the Church. Jesus said, "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another." Think of all the things we look for as signs that we are true followers of Jesus. Yet, we have not even begun to flesh out this cardinal virtue of the Christian life. As the Church continues to fight, split, and divide, no wonder the world looks upon us with reproach.

Our Hope

Is there any hope for the Church in America? I'm not sure. It may be that God has said to the Church in America, "Enough is enough. Nothing awaits you now but final judgment." Sometimes God says, "Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people: cast them out of my sight and let them go forth" (Jer. 15:1)" But there may be hope. In this prophecy, Joel says, "God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness and repenteth him of the evil. Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him?" Joel doesn't say that God is going to take back his sentence of judgment. He just says, "God is merciful. Who knows? Perhaps if we turn to the Lord by rending our hearts, weeping, and fasting, he will return and leave a blessing behind Him". If there is a possibility that God will change his people and make them holy, humble, and reverent; if there is even a remote possibility

that God will return and begin to convert even the hardest sinners and bitter opponents of the gospel; if there is even the slightest possibility that God will give us godly, holy, and powerful ministers of his word, then it is worth all the fasting, weeping, mourning, and praying.

When Jonah went to Nineveh his message was not much more than, "You've got 40 days, and God is going to judge you." But the king of Nineveh said, "Let man and beast be covered with sackcloth and cry mightily unto God: yea, let



them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?" There it is again. "Who can tell?" But this story ends in a wonderful way, for the Scripture tells us, "And God saw their works that they turned from the evil way; and

God repented of the evil that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not." God turned his wrath away from Nineveh. Who can tell, perhaps he will turn his judgments away from us. But whether he will or not, just the possibility gives us good reason to bow before him. This "who can tell" reminds that we may not presume on the grace of God. When we come before him, we must be aware of our unworthiness of his mercy. Nevertheless, we do have his word, "If my people, which are called by name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (II Chron. 7:14). We must never forget those words in the Prayer of Humble Access, "But thou art the same Lord whose property is always to have mercy." There is far more hope in those words "Who can tell?" than we can ever imagine. If the Church repents, then God will turn his judgments away from us. This Lenten season is a time that we should pray earnestly that God would grant the Church "true repentance, amendment of life, and the grace and consolation of his Holy Spirit."

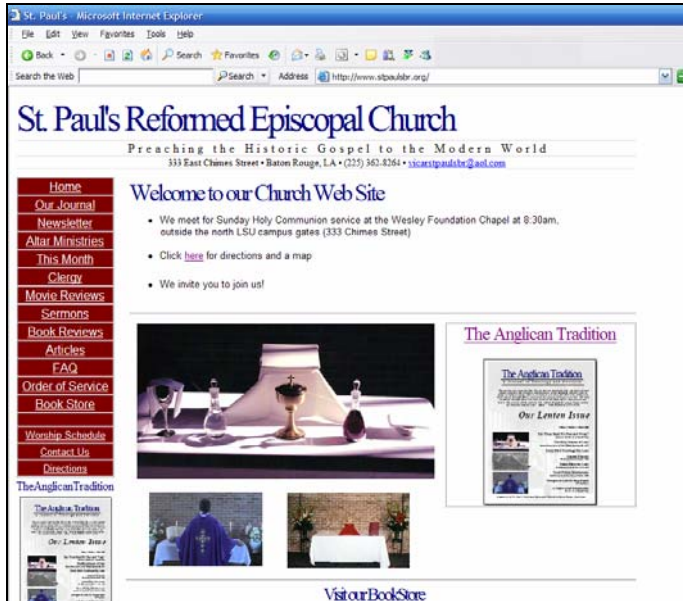
It seems that as a nation, and as a Church, we are under the blasting decree of God's judgment. If we are, then each of us will have to decide whether we care enough to do anything. If I have exaggerated the plight of the Church, then ignore me. But if I am correct in my assessment, we should employ this Lent as our Church fathers intended. Therefore, it is a good thing that during this Lent, we would follow the instruction contained in the book of Joel. There is much reason to fast, weep, mourn, and pray. This Ash Wednesday, let us begin to pray in earnest, "Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach." Amen.



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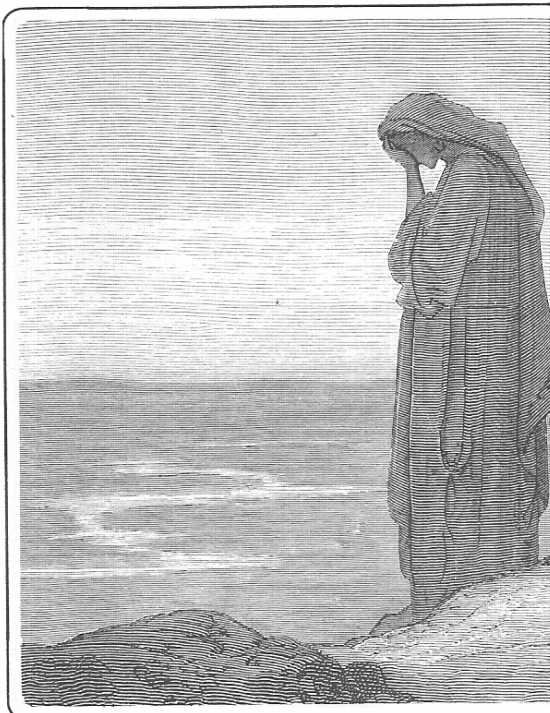
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Repentance



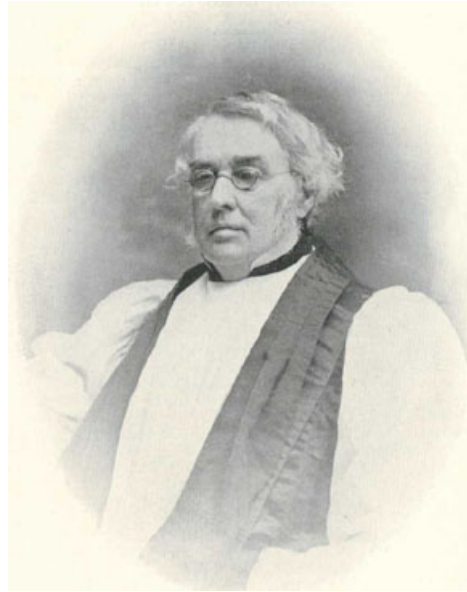
“Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all things, Judge of all men; We acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness which we, from time to time, most grievously have committed, By thought, word, and deed, Against thy Divine Majesty, Provoking most justly thy wrath and indignation against us. We do earnestly repent, And are heartily sorry for these our misdoings; The remembrance of them is grievous unto us; The burden of them is intolerable. Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father; For thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, Forgive us all that is past; And grant that we may ever hereafter Serve and please thee In newness of life, To the honour and glory of thy Name; Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

Prayer of Confession, Book of Common Prayer

The Holy Season of Lent

Its History, Object, and Proper Observance

*Excerpt from a Sermon By
the Rt. Rev. Wm. Ingraham Kip
D.D. Bishop of California.
New York: Pott, Young and Company
1874.*



The Object of the Primitive Church in Instituting the Holy Season of Lent

At length the changing months have brought us to another division of our ecclesiastical year. We have again entered on that solemn season, in which the Church commands her children to "turn unto the Lord with all their hearts, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning,"-- "worthily lamenting their sins, and acknowledging their wretchedness, that they may obtain of Him who is the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness, through Jesus Christ, their Lord." [Passage appointed for the Epistle for Ash-Wednesday, Collect for Ash-Wednesday.] Her services now give utterance to the language of sorrow and abasement, as we prepare for the solemn commemoration of our Lord's agony and death. It is interesting therefore to look back to the records of the early Church in her holiest day, that as we see the origin of this season, and the object for which it was appointed, we may be enabled to decide, whether we are so observing it, that it shall answer for us its high and important purposes.

The fast of Lent (a Saxon word, signifying the Spring) is of forty days continuance, during the six weeks which precede Easter. As however the Sundays are Festivals, and must therefore be excepted, only thirty-six days are left. To make up this deficiency, four days are added at the beginning, commencing with Ash-Wednesday, which derives its name from the ashes which in the ancient Church were at this time thrown upon the penitents, whose sins had debarred them from a participation in her services....

All record of the precise time in which this season first originated, is lost in the dim obscurity of the early ages of the Church.... The Lenten fast is however frequently referred to by writers of primitive days as an established

and well known custom, which had been sanctioned by Apostolical authority. The probability is, that even from the first--from the time in which "the Bridegroom was taken away"--His followers thus in sorrow kept the anniversary of His Passion, although the duration of this season, and the rules by which its observance was regulated, may not have been definitely settled until the age immediately succeeding that of the Apostles. Philo, who was cotemporary with the early disciples, and is even said "to have had familiar conversation with Peter at Rome, whilst he was proclaiming the Gospel to the inhabitants of that city," refers to this season in his description of the Christians at Alexandria, who were converted by St. Mark. [Eusebius' Eccles. Hist., liber ii., chap. 17, p. 66.] "This author"--says Eusebius, in his history composed about A.D. 324--"has accurately described and stated in his writings, the exercises performed by them," (i. e. the Christians of Alexandria in the days of St. Mark), "which are still in vogue among us at the present day, and especially at the festival of our Saviour's passion, which we are accustomed to pass in fasting and watching, and in the study of the divine word. These are the same customs that are observed by us alone at the present day, particularly the vigils of the Great Festival," meaning by this the Passion Week, called by the Greek Fathers the Great Week.

It is also mentioned incidentally by Irenaeus, who lived but ninety years after the death of St. John, and was trained up under the martyr Polycarp, who had himself been a disciple of that last surviving Apostle. "When alluding to a difference of opinion with regard to the time in which it should be kept, he shows that the custom itself was ancient, even in his day. His words are: "This diversity existing among those that observe it, is not a matter that has just sprung up in our time, but long ago, among those before us." [Ibid, lib. v., chap. 24, p. 210.]

Constantine, immediately after...



...the meeting of the earliest general council of the Church--that held at Nicea, A. D. 325--and which was composed, to use his own words, "of all the Bishops, or the greater part of them at least, assembled together," wrote a letter to all the Churches, on the necessity of observing

Easter upon the same day. His argument is, that unless this uniformity exists, some will be rejoicing in that Festival, while others are still mourning in the fasts which precede it. *"It is fit therefore"--he says--"that we should perpetuate to all future ages the celebration of this rite, which we have kept from the first day of our Lords passion even to the present times.....For the Saviour has bequeathed to us one festal day of our liberation, that is, the day of His most holy passion; and it was His pleasure that His Church should be one; the members of which, although dispersed in many and various places, are yet nourished by the same Spirit, that is, by the will of God. Let the sagacity of your holiness only consider how painful and indecorous it must be, for some to be experiencing the rigors of abstinence, and others to be unbending their minds in convivial enjoyments on the same day; and after Easter, for some to be indulging in feasting and relaxation while others are occupied in the observance of the prescribed fasts."*

To give a single reference more--and they might be multiplied to a great extent--this season is mentioned in the Apostolic Canons, a code of laws which certainly dates its authority from a very early age. "If"--says the 61st Canon--*"any Bishop, Priest, Deacon, Reader, or Singer, do not keep the holy fast of Lent, forty days before Easter, or the Wednesdays and Fridays, let him be deposed, if he be not hindered by some bodily infirmity; but if he be a layman, let him be suspended from communion."*

Thus, we perceive, that this custom took not its rise amidst the corruptions of the Dark Ages, but began in times of light and holiness. We received it not from the Romish Church, when it had fallen from ancient purity, but it comes down to us from Primitive days. It was sanctioned "by Apostolical authority, or certainly at least by those who lived before the example and instruction of Apostles had been in any respect forgotten. The early Christians, as we have already seen stated by Tertullian, considered our Divine Master as referring to the observance of some such

season, when he said: *"Can the children of the bride-chamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast."* At first, the time of its observance varied in different Churches and among different individuals, although all agreed in the necessity of thus commemorating, in some way, their Lord's sufferings and death. At length, however, its duration was fixed at forty days, which has since, through all the intervening centuries, continued to be the uniform custom of the Church. The number forty seems very anciently to have "been appropriated to seasons of repentance and fasting. "This quadragesimal number"--says St. Ambrose, in his 36th sermon--"is not constituted of men, but consecrated from God." For this term of years were the children of Israel disciplined in the wilderness, to prepare them for the promised land. For forty days did Moses fast on the Mount--Elijah in the Wilderness--and the Ninevites, when they would avert the judgments prophesied "by Jonah. It was this length of time that our Lord himself was pleased to fast, during His temptation in the desert, and from his example was this period probably fixed, "that,"--as St. Augustine says--"we might, as far as we are able, conform to Christ's practice, and suffer with Him here, that we may reign with Him hereafter."

And we may learn too from a single passage in St. Basil's Second Homily on Fasting, how universal throughout the world was the attention of the early Christians to this solemn portion of the Ecclesiastical year.

"In this time of Lent, there is no island nor continent of the earth, no city, nor nation, no extreme corner of the world, where the Edict of this Fast of Lent was not heard. Yea, whatsoever armies, merchants, travelers, or mariners are abroad, this fast comes unto them all, and with joy they all receive it. This composes every house, every city, and every people, in sobriety and quiet and concord. This stills the late clamors, contentions, and noises of the town. Let no one, therefore, exempt himself from the number of the fasters, in which every degree, nation and age almost of men, and all of all dignities whatsoever are engaged."

How safe then are we, in yielding our ready obedience to this regulation of the Church! How much better, to tread in the footsteps of martyrs and confessors of former times, than to set at naught all the customs which they found conducive to their spiritual benefit, and to determine--despising the wisdom of the past, and the recorded experience of eighteen centuries--to "walk every one in the ways of his own heart!" It becomes therefore an inquiry of interest to us, gleaning from those ancient writers whose works have survived the ravages of barbarism and the waste of time, to investigate the reasons which induced the Church in Primitive days to institute this Holy Season, and then through all succeeding ages, to insist so strongly upon its observance.

The First Reason Was That...



... having the subject of their Lord's suffering thus brought more vividly before them, they might be induced to mourn his loss with greater earnestness.

There is a tendency in the human mind to disregard a duty,

to the performance of which no specific time is allotted. Thus, if the whole year were given us, during which we were commanded at some period to meditate seriously on our Lord's death, we should probably either neglect the obligation entirely, or, at least, fulfill it but imperfectly. It is for this reason that the early Church set apart definite times, for considering in order each of the grand doctrines of the Christian faith, as the Ecclesiastical year rolls round. And in this practice we now continue.

Beautiful indeed is that arrangement of her services, which, as the months go by, brings in succession before her Children, each scene in their Lord's eventful life, and each cardinal truth which he taught! We celebrate with joy and gratitude the Festival of His Nativity, and afterwards follow Him on, step by step, through all the glories and the trials of His earthly pilgrimage, until amid the solemnities of Passion Week we mourn His agonies and death. Then come in meet succession, the other Festivals--that of Easter, when He triumphed over the grave--of the Ascension, when He returned to "the glory which He had with the Father before the world was"--and of Whitsunday, when His promise was fulfilled, that the Comforter should be given, and His Apostles, by the visible descent of the Holy Ghost, were prepared to be "lights to lighten the world."

Acting then on this principle, and endeavoring to render the views of her members clear and distinct, how naturally did it happen, that one of the first seasons of solemn remembrance instituted by the Primitive Church, was that which commemorated her Lord's sufferings and death, while her children were summoned in an especial manner to lament those sins which brought Him to the Cross! ["It seemed good to the Church to fix a stated time, in which men might enter on the great work of their repentance. And what time could have been selected with greater propriety than this 'Lenten' or Spring Season, when universal Nature, awakening from her wintry sleep, and coming out of a state of deformity, and a course of penance, imposed for the transgression of man, her Lord and Master, is about to rise from the dead; and, putting on her garments of glory and beauty, to give us a kind of prelude to the renovation of all things? So that the whole creation most harmoniously accompanieth the voice of the Church, as that sweetly accordeth to the call of the

Apostle, Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."--Bishop HORNE.] "The days had come, when the Bridegroom was taken from them, and therefore did they fast." The memory of His love and kindness was still freshly imprinted on their hearts. The history of all that He endured, came not to them, as it too often does to us, like "a thrice-told tale," to which we have listened so often that it has lost its interest. The glad news of the Gospel bursting upon them in an age of moral degradation and darkness, had not yet ceased to thrill their hearts with joy. They had either "known Christ after the flesh," when in person he mingled with his fellow men, or at least those Apostles who sat at his sacred feet, forming His little household as He wandered through Judea; and with eager ears they listened to the recital from their lips, of all that they had heard and witnessed. Probably too, the tradition of many a deed which is now lost forever, came down to them, and contributed to heighten their estimation of that Perfect Character, from whom they were separated by but a short interval of time. [It is strange that the only one of these traditionary sayings of our Lord, which was afterwards recorded by an inspired writer, is intended to inculcate a truth, the most difficult for human nature to learn. St. Paul says--"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said: It is more blessed to give than to receive."--Acts xx. 33.] How well then could they meditate upon His bitter agonies endured for them! How forcibly did they feel themselves called, once at least in each year, in an especial manner to chasten their souls by prayer and fasting, that they might thus be compelled to realize the nature of His earthly existence, who was truly "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief!"

But if this was necessary for them, how much more so is it for us! Educated from the earliest dawn of reason, to hear the story of redeeming love, and the fearful manner in which our salvation was wrought out, these themes become to us, as we before remarked, subjects too well known to excite attention. It is indispensable, therefore, that the mind should be directed and fixed upon them. And how admirably is this done by the appointed service of the Church! "Week after week, we are led in her prayers and lessons to contemplate these solemn mysteries, until when Passion Week arrives, the recital is each day repeated. We witness the bitter agony of the Son of God, in the garden of Gethsemane. We stand by the patient sufferer's side, when arraigned in the hall of Pilate. We follow Him to Calvary, as he painfully toils along amidst the scoffs and jeers of an infuriated mob. We gather around the Cross, and hear that last expiring cry, which shrouded the heavens in darkness, and startled even the sleeping dead in their tombs. Hard, indeed, must be that heart--yes, utterly "past feeling"--which, amid scenes like these, is not awakened to gratitude and devotion. He can be no true follower of the Lord, whose spirit does not "burn within him" as he thus contemplates the mighty price at which his redemption was purchased, or whose resolution is not strengthened, to live for that Master who died a death of shame for him.

Another Reason...

...with the Primitive Church for the institution of this season was to aid her members in preserving the high standard of Christian Character in its early purity.



For a time, the followers of our Lord were subjected to the most painful persecutions.... The ancient, sensual Paganism, and the proud systems of a scoffing philosophy, united at once to crush that holy creed, which disclaimed all fellowship with them. The

endurance of its adherents was tried by every expedient of cruelty their enemies could devise. Some died in agony at the stake. Some ascended to their reward from the burning flames, while "their ashes flew, no marble tells us whither." Some "butchered to make a Roman holiday," poured out their blood on the sands of the amphitheatre, welcoming even the wild beasts, whose fury released them from their sufferings. And the survivors felt, that they also were each hour in jeopardy of life, and might at any time be called in like manner to seal their profession. Yet these things only added a depth and fervor to their devotion. Like their Divine Master, they "were made perfect by sufferings." The timid and wavering, either refrained from uniting with them, or else soon apostatized from their profession. The true-hearted were therefore left alone, reduced indeed in numbers, yet "steadfast, unmovable," and holding themselves ready, if needs be, to win their crown by suffering the pains of martyrdom.... The world looked coldly on them, even when it did not openly persecute, and had therefore nothing in it to enlist their affections. Life with them was one long Lenten period of abstinence and prayer, while they were continually chastening their spirits, to make ready for that parting hour, which might suddenly overtake them.

But when security came, and the world began to smile upon them, then was the time of peril. The faith which had been strengthening in the storm of persecution, drooped and withered in the sunshine of Imperial favor. The multitude insensibly declined from their Apostolic devotion, and thought too much of the cares and riches of a world they had vowed to renounce. Their affections began to cling to it, forgetting that here they were only strangers and pilgrims "having no continuing city." It was at this time probably that this fast, commenced in an earlier age,

was more accurately defined and inculcated by the regulations of the Church, that her members might be recalled from their secular cares to holy works, and thus by the necessity of a law, compelled to dedicate one tenth of the year, in a peculiar manner to their God. Therefore It is, that an ancient writer declares--"Whilst men are distracted about the cares of this life, their religious hearts must needs be defiled with the dust of this world; and therefore it is provided by the great benefit of this Divine institution, that the purity of our minds might be repaired by the exercise of these forty days, in which we may redeem the failings of other times, and do good works, and exercise ourselves in religious fasting."

But has this necessity in our day ceased? Is there now so great a deadness in the world, that we need not such a season, to recall us to our duty? Is not the very reverse true, and the danger now tenfold greater than it was in that early day? Since all around us have made a nominal profession of Christianity, the Church has been too much mingled with the world. The harrier between them has been somewhat broken down, and there is comparatively but little of the outward Cross to be borne. But the effect of this is, to authenticate low views of Christian duty--to render religion earthly--to withdraw all attention from self-denial--to cause us to forget our Master's lesson, that though in the world we are not of the world--and to induce those about us to suppose that the "strait gate" has been widened, and the "narrow way" become broad. They look in vain for those exhibitions of a living faith which distinguished the early Christians, and are therefore tempted to believe, that the days of self-discipline are over, and an easier entrance found into God's holy kingdom.

The very proofs too of Christian character--the marks by which we should ascertain our spiritual state--are in this age of novelties so perverted and mystified, that it is often difficult for an inquirer to decide, whether or not he has a right to those promises of the Gospel which are made to the contrite and believing. With some, every thing rests upon abstract notions of faith, as if the last Great Judgment would only be a trial of their orthodoxy. With others, all religion is resolved into a matter of mere feeling. Forgetting that the degree of excitement depends upon the power of the imagination, or the peculiar constitution of the mind, they are continually striving to elevate themselves to a greater intensity of emotion, and thus make this, intangible as it is, their test of religious character. The latter form of delusion indeed we may characterize as being in an especial degree, the popular one of the day. This awakening of the sensibilities and of the imagination, is substituted in the place of that calm, settled, decided resolution to obey the will of our Master, which alone can be an efficient rule of conduct in this evil world. These unearthly paroxysms of devotion, which soon pass away and leave behind them no abiding holiness, are trusted to, instead of that "patient continuance in well doing," which alone can lead us on to "eternal life."

How Necessary is it then...

...that there should be times of reflection, when we may realize what are the true evidences of having passed from spiritual death, to the light and liberty of GOD'S own children! And it is to the standard of pure religion, that the Church at this time endeavors to recall us. A perpetual witness for the faith, her voice is heard "through the ages all along," publishing truths of which an evil world would



willingly lose sight, and pointing her members to the bright examples of those who, in earlier, purer days, "fought the good fight," and "inherited the promises." From her we learn, that religion consists, not in talking much and eloquently on the subject--not alone in striving to feel spiritually--not even in being warm and earnest in aiding the progress of the Church. An individual may do all these things, and yet be only like "sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal." That faith of the heart by which we "believe unto righteousness," is no wavering impulse. It is a fixed, steadfast habit of the mind, shown by our renouncing the spirit of the world--subduing our own evil tempers--living "soberly, righteously, and godly"--"crucifying the flesh, with the affections and lusts"--and acting in truth as the self-denying followers of that Master of whom it is recorded, that He "pleased not Himself." And while the Church thus defines the evidences of spiritual life, and declares the Christian conflict to be "an earnest, endless strife," she at the same time most sternly rebukes the compromising spirit of the day. She summons her children to come out from a sinful and apostate world. She bids them not live as other men do, in ease and idleness, when so much is to be accomplished for their Lord. She inquires how they can be "delicate on the earth," when they are called by their Master to "drink of the cup of which He drank," and to be conformed to Him alike in His sufferings and His life. And it is by the abstinence and self-mortification of this solemn season, that she strives to impress these lessons. If therefore they listen to her teaching, and tread this scene of mists and shadows beneath their feet, each returning year will endow them with added strength, while they travel onward to that world of light, to which she points them as their eternal home. They will learn to despise the fleeting and the perishable, and even while still imprisoned in this tabernacle of clay their spirits will yearn for communion with the Enduring and the Infinite....

And in harmony with such convictions, we find that all the services of Lent breathe an evident feeling of contrition--that we every where present ourselves in the attitude of humility, and pray our merciful Father to grant us "perfect remission and forgiveness." Let us strive then to partake of the spirit of these petitions: and when we look around us and remember how far, as a Church, we have wandered from the path of primitive holiness, how lukewarm is our devotion, and how feeble our faith compared with what it should be, we shall realize that there is reason for that deep and searching penitence which our Master seeks to kindle up within us, and the expression of which is heard so often in our Liturgy.

These, then, are the reasons which induced the early Church to institute this Holy Season, thus exercising the power entrusted to her, "to decree rites and ceremonies." [Article xx. Of the Authority of the Church--"The Church hath power to decree rites or ceremonies."] It is with her sanction that we are summoned to its observance. It is impressed upon us by the solemn voice which comes down from the years of a distant and dim antiquity. In these services many generations have already joined, and thus gathered strength for the journey which lay before them. They have long since passed away, leaving to us not only their "bright examples, but also the record of their experience. We stand in their places. We are the honored guardians of all those rites and institutions which they in their day found useful in the Church, and then bequeathed to such as should come after them. Solemn indeed is the trust--may we never betray it! May we always remember that we are "baptized for the dead"--inheriting their responsibilities--enjoying the fruits of their labors--and that we must commit this sacred heritage undiminished to our successors. Let us never then be willing to give up these ancient services, which were used by the holy dead, whose memory we love, or to substitute in their place the novelties of an age "emulous of change." Let us be content to tread the path which still gleams brightly with the steps of those who for Christ's sake and the gospel's "counted not their lives dear unto themselves." Let us strive, as they did, against an unholy world--loving with a true devotion, the Church for which they died--and seeking to imbibe the spirit which reigns in her courts. And then, when "life's fitful fever" is over, we shall be admitted with the just whom we have followed on earth, to the Paradise of God--to "the general assembly and Church of the first-born, which are written in Heaven." ✍

Daily Bible Readings for Lent

March

<u>Date</u>	<u>Morning</u>
Wed, 3/ 1	Psalm 32, 143; Isaiah 58:1-12; Hebrews 12:1-14;
Thur, 3/ 2	Psalm 27; Gen. 19:1-3, 12-17, 24-28; I Cor. 1:1-17
Fri, 3/ 3	Psalm 95 & 40:1-16; Gen. 21:9-21; I Cor. 1:18-31
Sat, 3/ 4	Psalm 28; Gen. 22:1-14, 19; I Cor. 2
Sun, 3/ 5	Psalm 50, 3, 62; Isaiah 58; Matthew 6:1-18; Luke 5:33-6:10;
Mon, 3/ 6	Psalm 36; Gen. 24:1-27; I Cor. 3:1-17;
Tue, 3/ 7	Psalm 37:1-24; Gen. 24:28-38, 49-51, 58-67; I Cor. 3:18-4:5
Wed, 3/ 8	Psalm 26; Ezekiel 2; Matthew 9:1-13
Thur, 3/ 9	Psalm 37:26-40; Gen. 25:28-34; I Cor. 4:6-21
Fri, 3/ 10	Psalm 95 & 84; Ezekiel 34:1-16; Matthew 10:24-33; 37-42
Sat, 3/ 11	Psalm 101; Ezekiel 34:17-25, 30-31; II Timothy 2:1-15
Sun, 3/ 12	Psalm 86, 142, 30, 32; I Kings 8:37-43; Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32; Colossians 3:12-17; Matthew 5:27-37
Mon, 3/ 13	Psalm 39; Gen. 27:1-29; I Cor. 5
Tue, 3/ 14	Psalm 41; Gen. 27:30-40; I Cor. 6:1-11
Wed, 3/ 15	Psalm 56; Gen. 27:46-28:4, 10-22; I Cor. 6:12-20
Thur, 3/ 16	Psalm 62; Gen. 29:1-13, 18-20; I Cor. 7:1-17
Fri, 3/ 17	Psalm 95, 54, & 61; Gen. 32:22-31; I Cor. 8;
Sat, 3/ 18	Psalm 63; Gen. 35:1-17, 16-20; I Cor. 9:1-14
Sun, 3/ 19	Psalm 25, 34; Deut. 6:1-9; 20-25; Zech. 1:1-6, 12-17; I Cor. 3; Mark 8:27-91
Mon, 3/ 20	Psalm 68:1-19; Gen. 37:3-28; I Cor. 9:15-27
Tue, 3/ 21	Psalm 74; Gen. 40; I Cor. 10:1-13
Wed, 3/ 22	Psalm 75, 76; Gen. 41:1a, 8, 14-24; I Cor. 10:14-22
Thur, 3/ 23	Psalm 85; Gen. 41:25-40; I Cor. 10:23-11:1
Fri, 3/ 24	Psalm 95 & 79; Gen. 42:1-26, 29a, 35-38; I Cor. 11:17-34
Sat, 3/ 25	Ps. 89:1-19; Gen. 43:1-5, 11-16, 26-34; I Cor. 12:1-11
Sun, 3/ 26	Psalm 147; 18:1-20; Exod. 16:14-15; Ezek. 39:21-29; II Cor. 3:12-18
Mon, 3/ 27	Psalm 90; Gen. 44; I Cor. 12:12-31a
Tue, 3/ 28	Psalm 93, 96; Gen. 45; I Cor. 12:31b-13:13
Wed, 3/ 29	Psalm 94; Gen. 24:29-31 & 48:8-20; I Cor. 14:1-12
Thur, 3/ 30	Psalm 104; Gen. 49:33-50:26; I Cor. 14:13-25
Fri, 3/ 31	Psalm 95 & 102; Exod. 1:8-14, 22; I Cor. 15:1-11

<u>Evening</u>
Psalm 102, 130; Jonah 3 & 4; Luke 15:10-32;
Psalm 29, 30; Jer. 1:4-10, 13-19; John 8:1-11;
Psalm 31; Jer. 2:1-9, 13; John 8:12-20, 31-36;
Psalm 34; Jer. 3:11-18; John 8:45-59;
Ps. 15, 92, 69:1-19, 30-37; Jer. 17:5-14, Daniel 9:3-1; I Cor. 10:1-13;
Psalm 42, 43; Jer. 3:19-25; John 9:1-23;
Psalm 45, 47; Jer. 4:1-9; John 9:24-41;
Psalm 4, 16; Ezek. 3:16-27; II Cor. 4;
Psalm 49; Jer. 4:11-22; John 10:1-10;
Psalm 77; Ezek. 37:1-14; I Timothy 4;
Psalm 19, 23; Ezekiel 37:21-28; I Timothy 6:6-21;
Psalm 26; 119:1-16; II Sam. 12:1-10, 13-14; I Cor. 6:9-20; Luke 18:1-8;
Psalm 50; Jer. 4:23-31; John 10:11-21;
Psalm 51; Jer. 5:1-9; John 10:22-38;
Psalm 65, 67; Jer. 5:10-19; John 11:1-16;
Psalm 66; Jer. 5:20-31; John 11:17-27;
Psalm 69:1-22, 30-37; Jer. 6:1-8; John 11:28-44;
Psalm 72; Jer. 6:9-21; John 11:45-57
Psalm 119:113-128 & 143; Amos 5:4-15; Prov. 4:7-18; Gal. 5:16-24; Luke 11:29-36
Psalm 71; Jer. 7:1-15; Mark 10:17-31;
Psalm 73; Jer. 7:21-29; Mark 10:32-45;
Psalm 77; Jer. 8:4-13; Mark 10:46-52;
Psalm 80; Jer. 9:2-16; Mark 11:12-26;
Psalm 86; Jer. 9:17-24; Mark 12:1-12;
Psalm 103; Jer. 10:1-13; Mark 12:13-17;
Ps. 116, 46, 122; Isaiah 55; Rev. 3:1-12;
Psalm 91; Jer. 13:15-27; Mark 12:18-27;
Psalm 92; Jer. 14:1-10; Mark 12:28-37
Psalm 97, 98; Jer. 15:1-9; Mark 12:38-44
Psalm 99, 100; Jer. 15:10-21; Mark 13:1-13
Psalm 107; Jer. 16:5-13; Mark 13:14-23

April

<u>Date</u>	<u>Morning</u>
Sat, 4/ 1	Psalm 108:1-6 & 112; Exod. 2:1-22; I Cor. 15:1-11
Sun, 4/ 2	Psalm 51, 71; Isaiah 1:10-20; Deut. 18:15-22; Luke 20:9-18;
Mon, 4/ 3	Psalm 119:1-16; Exod. 3:1-15; I Cor. 15:12-19
Tue, 4/ 4	Psalm 123, 127; Exod. 4:10-18, 27-31; I Cor. 15:20-34
Wed, 4/ 5	Psalm 128, 129; Exod. 5:1-9; I Cor. 15:35-49
Thur, 4/ 6	Psalm 144; Exod. 11:1-8; I Cor. 15:50-58
Fri, 4/ 7	Psalm 141:1-4, 146; Exod. 12:21-28; I Cor. 16:1-14
Sat, 4/ 8	Psalm 147; Exod. 12:29-39, 42; I Cor. 16:15-24
Sun, 4/ 9	Psalm 24, 97, 22; Zech. 9:9-12; Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Mark 11:1-11; Matthew 26
Mon, 4/ 10	Psalm 71; Isa. 42:1-7; John 14:1-14
Tue, 4/ 11	Psalm 6, 12; Hosea 14; John 15:1-16
Wed, 4/ 12	Psalm 94; Zech. 12:9-10 & 13:1, 7-9 ; John 16:1-15
Thur, 4/ 13	Psalm 116; Jer. 31:31-34; John 13:18-38
Fri, 4/ 14	Psalm 22, 40:1-16, 54; Gen. 22:1-18; John 18
Sat, 4/ 15	Psalm 14, 16; Job 14:1-14; John 19:38-42;

<u>Evening</u>
Psalm 118; Jer. 17:5-14; Mark 13:24-27
Psalm 42, 43, 40:1-16; Hosea 6:1-6; Jer. 14:7-21; John 10:17-38;
Psalm 119:17-32 & 117; Jer. 20:7-13; John 12:1-11
Psalm 120, 121, 122; Jer. 22:10-23; John 12:12-19
Psalm 132; Jer. 28:1-2, 10-17; John 12:20-33
Psalm 133, 134, 137:1-6; Jer. 30:12-17, 23-24; John 12:34-43
Psalm 139; Jer. 32:36-42; John 12:44-50
Psalm 145; Jer. 33:1-9, 14-16; John 13:1-17
Psalm 130, 138, 77; Jer. 8:9-15, 18-9:1; Isa. 59:1-3, 9-21; I Cor. 1:17-31; John 12:20-36
Psalm 42, 43; Lam. 1:7-12; John 14:15-31
Psalm 51; Lam. 2:10, 13-19; John 15:17-27
Psalm 74; Lam. 3:1, 14-33; John 16:15-33
Psalm 142, 143; Lam. 3:40-58; John 17
Psalm 69:1-22 & 88; Isaiah 52:13-53:12; I Peter 2:11-25
Psalm 27; Job 19:21-27a; Romans 6:3-11;

Lenten Prayers

These prayers are from the 1928 Book of Common Prayer
unless otherwise noted.

Prayers of repentance should be a major part of the observance of the season of Lent. Here are a few prayers that encourage self-examination, implore God's forgiveness, and seek assurance of His mercy and grace through Jesus Christ.

O LORD, we beseech thee favourably to hear the prayers of thy people; that we, who are justly punished for our offences, may be mercifully delivered by thy goodness, for the glory of thy Name; through Jesus Christ our Saviour, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost ever, one God, world without end. Amen.

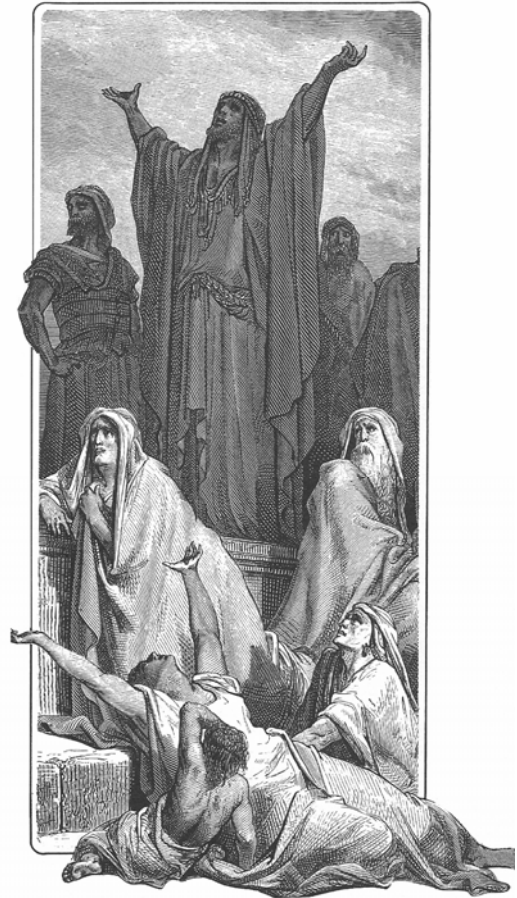
O LORD, who for our sake didst fast forty days and forty nights; Give us grace to use such abstinence, that, our flesh being subdued to the Spirit we may ever obey thy godly motions in righteousness, and true holiness, to thy honour and glory, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

ALMIGHTY God, who hast given thine only Son to be unto us both a sacrifice for sin, and also an ensample of godly life; Give us grace that we may always most thankfully receive that his inestimable benefit, and also daily endeavour ourselves to follow the blessed steps of his most holy life; through the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

GRANT, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that we, who for our evil deeds do worthily deserve to be punished, by the comfort of thy grace may mercifully be relieved; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

O LORD, we beseech thee, mercifully hear our prayers, and spare all those who confess their sins unto thee; that they, whose consciences by sin are accused, by thy merciful pardon may be absolved; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

O MOST mighty God, and merciful Father, who hast compassion upon all men, and who wouldest not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his sin, and be saved; Mercifully forgive us our trespasses; receive and



comfort us, who are grieved and wearied with the burden of our sins. Thy property is always to have mercy; to thee only it appertaineth to forgive sins. Spare us therefore, good Lord, spare thy people, whom thou hast redeemed; enter not into judgment with thy servants; but so turn thine anger from us, who meekly acknowledge our transgressions, and truly repent us of our faults, and so make haste to help us in this world, that we may ever live with thee in the world to come; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

TURN thou us, O good Lord, and so shall we be turned. Be favourable, O Lord, Be favourable to thy people, Who turn to thee in weeping, fasting, and praying. For thou art a merciful God, Full of compassion, Long-suffering, and of great pity. Thou sparest when we deserve punishment, And in thy wrath thinkest upon mercy. Spare thy people, good Lord, spare them, And let not thine heritage be brought to confusion. Hear us, O Lord, for thy mercy is great, And after the multitude of thy mercies look upon us; Through the merits and mediation of thy blessed Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O GOD, whose nature and property is ever to have mercy and to forgive; Receive our humble petitions; and though we be tied and bound with the chain of our sins, yet let the pitifulness of thy great mercy loose us; for the honour of Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Advocate. Amen.

A Prayer for Lent

By Bishop Jeremy Taylor

Have mercy upon me, O God, after thy great goodness; according to the multitude of thy mercies do away mine offences: for I will confess my wickedness, and be sorry for my sin. O my dearest Lord, I am not worthy to be accounted amongst the meanest of thy servants, not worthy to be sustained by the least fragments of thy mercy, but to be shut out of thy presence for ever with dogs and unbelievers. But for thy name's sake, O Lord, be merciful unto my sin, for it is great. I am the vilest of sinners, and the worst of men; proud, and vain-glorious, impatient of scorn or of just reproof; not enduring to be slighted, and yet extremely deserving it; I have pretended humility, and when I have truly called myself vicious I could not endure any man else should say so or think so. I have been disobedient, unchristian, and unmanly. But for thy name's sake, O Lord, be merciful unto my sin, for it is great.

O just and dear God, how can I expect pity or pardon, who am so angry and peevish, with and without cause, envious at good, rejoicing in the evil of my neighbours, negligent of my charge, idle and useless, timorous and base, jealous and impudent, ambitious and hard-hearted, soft, unmortified, and effeminate in my life, undevout in my prayers, without affection, without attendance to them or perseverance in them; but passionate and curious in pleasing my appetite of meat, and drink, and pleasures, making matter both for sin and sickness; and I have reaped the cursed fruits of such improvidence, entertaining indecent and impure thoughts, and I have brought them forth in indecent and impure actions, and the spirit of uncleanness hath entered in and unhallowed the temple which thou didst consecrate for the habitation of thy Spirit of love and holiness. But for thy name's sake, O Lord, be merciful unto my sin, for it is great.

Thou hast given me a whole life to serve thee in, and to advance my hopes of heaven; and this precious time I have thrown away upon my sins and vanities, being improvident of my time and of my talent, and of thy grace and my own advantages, resisting thy Spirit and quenching him. I have been a great lover of myself, and yet used many ways to destroy myself. I have pursued my temporal ends with greediness and indirect means. I am revengeful and unthankful, forgetting benefits, but not so soon forgetting injuries, curious and murmuring, a great breaker of promises. I have not loved my neighbour's good, nor advanced it in all things, where I could. I have been unlike thee in all things. I am unmerciful and unjust: a sottish admirer of things below, and careless of heaven and the ways that lead thither.

But for thy name's sake, O Lord, be merciful unto my sin, for it is great. All my senses have been windows to let sin in, and death by sin. Mine eyes have been adulterous and covetous; mine ears open to slander and detraction; my tongue and palate loose and wanton, intemperate, and of foul language, talkative and lying, rash and malicious, false and flattering, irreligious and irreverent, detracting and censorious; my hands have been injurious and unclean, my passions violent and rebellious, my desires impatient and unreasonable; all my members and all my faculties have been servants of sin; and

my very best actions have more matter of pity than of confidence, being imperfect in my best, and intolerable in most. - But for thy name's sake, O Lord, be merciful unto my sin, for it is great.

Unto this and a far bigger heap of sin I have added also the faults of others to my own score, by neglecting to hinder them to sin in all that I could and ought; but I also have encouraged them in sin, have taken off their fears, and hardened their conscience, and tempted them directly, and prevailed in it to my own ruin and theirs, unless thy glorious and unspeakable mercy hath prevented so intolerable a calamity. Lord, I have abused thy mercy, despised thy judgments, turned thy grace into wantonness. I have been unthankful for thy infinite loving-kindness. I have sinned and repented, and then sinned again and resolved against it, and presently broke it; and then I tied myself up with vows, and then was tempted, and then I yielded by little and little, till I was willingly lost again, and my vows fell off like cords of vanity. Miserable man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of sin?

And yet, O Lord, I have another heap of sins to be unloaded. My secret sins, O Lord, are innumerable; sins I noted not; sins that I willingly neglected; sins that I acted upon wilful ignorance and voluntary mispersuasion; sins that I have forgot; and sins which a diligent and a watchful spirit might have prevented, but I would not. Lord, I am confounded with the multitude of them, and the horror of their remembrance though I consider them nakedly in their direct appearance, without the deformity of their unhandsome and aggravating circumstances; but, so dressed, they are a sight too ugly, an instance of amazement, infinite in degrees, and insufferable in their load. And yet thou hast spared me all this while, and hast not thrown me into hell, where I have deserved to have been long since, and even now to have been shut up to an eternity of torments, with insupportable amazement, fearing the revelation of thy day. Miserable man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of sin? Thou shalt answer for me, O Lord my God. Thou that prayest for me shalt be my judge.

Thou hast prepared for me a more healthful sorrow; O deny not thy servant when he begs sorrow of thee. Give me a deep contrition for my sins, a hearty detestation and loathing of them, hating them worse than death with torments. Give me grace entirely, presently, and for ever, to forsake them; to walk with care and prudence with fear and watchfulness, all my days; to do all my duty with diligence and charity, with zeal and a never fainting spirit; to redeem the time, to trust upon thy mercies, to make use of all the instruments of grace, to work out my salvation with fear and trembling; that thou mayest have the glory of pardoning all my sins, and I may reap the fruit of all thy mercies and all thy graces, of thy patience and long-suffering, even to live a holy life here, and to reign with thee for ever, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

A Prayer for Graces

A Prayer that God Would Grant Us the Graces and Virtues of the Christian Life, by Richard Hele (Hele's Select Offices of Private Devotion, 1856)

Most blessed God, the Fountain of all goodness, who didst create man at first in Thine own image, and when that was defaced by sin, wast graciously pleased to create us again in Christ Jesus after Thine own likeness, in righteousness and true holiness; I humbly beseech Thee of Thine infinite goodness and mercy to endue me, Thy most unworthy creature, with that God-like temper of mind and those heavenly virtues, which constitute the new creature; and which may dispose me for the attainment of that glorious end, for which I was created, redeemed, and regenerated.

Send down, O Heavenly Father, the graces of the Holy Spirit upon Thy servant to sanctify my nature; to renew me in the spirit of my mind; and to enable me so diligently to tread in the blessed steps of my Divine Master and Saviour, that the life of Jesus may be seen in all my actions, and His image be formed in my soul; and that, devoting myself wholly to Thy holy will and pleasure, I may constantly strive to employ every faculty of my soul, and every member of my body, and every day of my life, in Thy service, and to Thy glory.

Possess my soul, I beseech Thee, with such strong and lively apprehensions of the adorable perfections of Thy Majesty, and of the absolute necessity of my being in some measure a partaker of the Divine nature here, in order to qualify me for the fruition of Thy glorious Godhead hereafter, as may effectually engage me to be holy, as Thou art holy; pure, as Thou art pure; and conformable to Thee in all Thine imitable excellencies.

Give me grace O Lord, to love Thee with all my heart, and to serve Thee with all my strength; and to make Thee, the Omnipresent and Omnipotent God, my only fear and hope, my trust and confidence, my joy and desire. Dispose me to hear, and read, and meditate on Thy word with attention and delight; to pray without ceasing; to give thanks to Thee in everything; to be constant and conscientious in the performance of all religious duties; and to perform them always with such reverence and devotion, as

may be acceptable in Thy sight, through the mediation of Jesus Christ my Saviour.

O Holy Father, enable me, I beseech Thee, to cleanse my heart from all evil imaginations; to subdue every inordinate desire; and to fix my mind upon those transcendent and durable pleasures which are at Thy right hand. Grant, O Lord, that I may make it my principal concern and endeavor to please Thee, by being pure and chaste in all my thoughts; sober, contented, and thankful in all my enjoyments, humble in my opinion of myself, charitable in all my sentiments and speeches of others; meek and patient under provocations and injuries, sincere and faithful in all my professions, just and upright in all my dealings, diligent and cheerful in all my employments, discreet, inoffensive, and blameless in my conversation, and useful in every relation and capacity of life.

And I beseech Thee, O Lord, to pour into my heart such a measure of that most excellent gift of charity, as may dispose me, for Thy sake, to love all men as I love myself; to forgive and pray for my enemies, persecutors, and slanderers; and to be ready to do all the good offices in my power to any of my fellow-creatures.

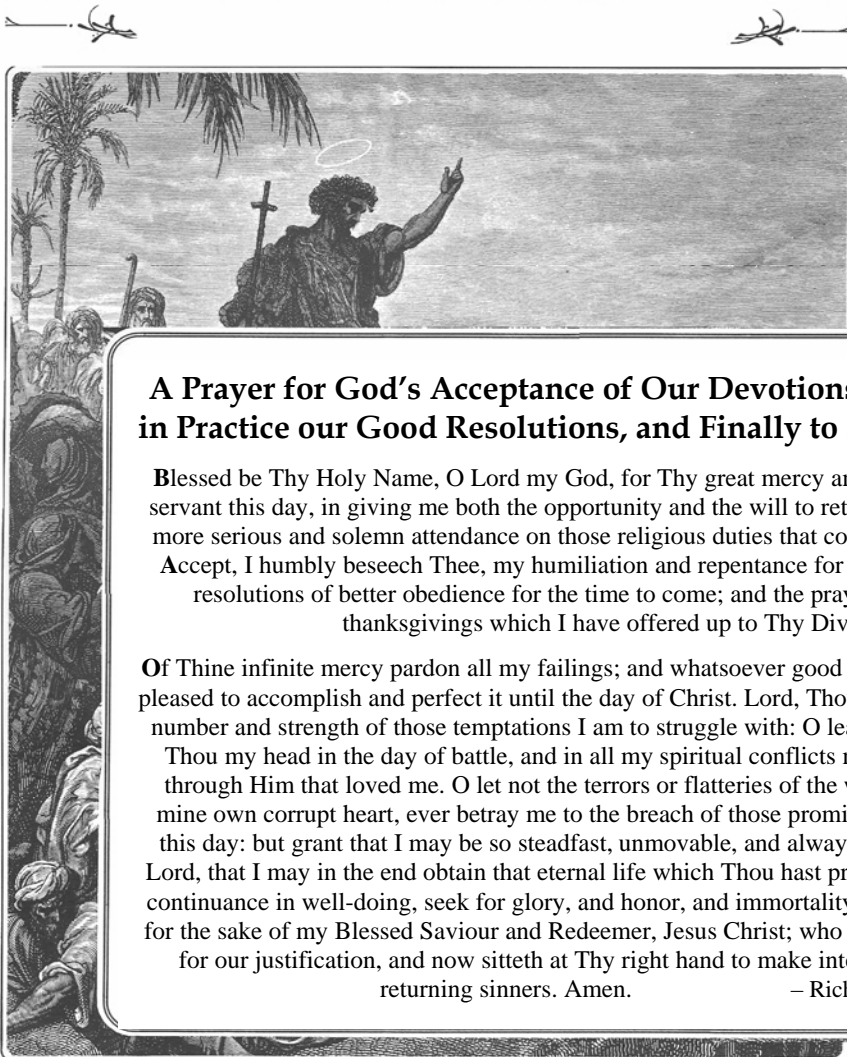
Finally, O Lord, I most humbly beg that whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report, I may think on these things; and that they may abound in me every day more and more: that I may be always growing wiser and better; always studying to do more and more good; always laboring to be stronger in the faith, richer in good works, more frequent in my devotions, more fervent in Thy service, more zealous for Thy glory, more eminent in meekness and humility, in patience, charity, and everything that is good and acceptable to Thee; that so I may shine as a light in the world, and excite others by my example to glorify Thee our Heavenly Father; and when Jesus Christ the Chief Shepherd shall appear, I may receive of him a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Amen.



A Prayer to Use Before Self Examination

Richard Hele (*Heles' Select Offices of Private Devotion, 1856*)

Most great and holy Lord God, who searchest the heart and triest the reins, and requirest truth in the inward parts; help me now, I beseech Thee, so diligently and impartially to examine my life, and to seek the ground of my heart, that I may discover all my most hidden corruptions, and suffer not any accursed thing to lurk within me. I have sinned, O Lord, and have done perversely: I have committed wickedness: I have sinned against Thee from my youth, even unto this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord my God. Lord, make me to know my transgression and my sin, and to loathe myself in mine own sight for all the evils that I have committed. Open mine eyes, O Lord, that I may see the excellency of Thy law; and assuredly knowing that all Thy commandments are holy, and just, and good, I may be ashamed and confounded at my own perverseness and ingratitude, in having so often and so grievously offended against them; and may so bethink myself, and repent, and mourn, and cry mightily unto Thee for pardon and grace, that Thou mayest hear my prayer and my supplication from heaven, Thy dwelling-place, and forgive me all my transgressions wherein I have transgressed against Thee, and hearken unto me in all that I shall call upon Thee for; through the mediation of Jesus Christ, Thine only Son our Saviour. Amen



A Prayer for God's Acceptance of Our Devotions, and for Grace to Put in Practice our Good Resolutions, and Finally to Attain Everlasting Life

Blessed be Thy Holy Name, O Lord my God, for Thy great mercy and goodness to Thine unworthy servant this day, in giving me both the opportunity and the will to retire from the world, in order to a more serious and solemn attendance on those religious duties that concern my everlasting salvation.

Accept, I humbly beseech Thee, my humiliation and repentance for all the sins of my past life; my resolutions of better obedience for the time to come; and the prayers, and supplications, and thanksgivings which I have offered up to Thy Divine Majesty.

Of Thine infinite mercy pardon all my failings; and whatsoever good work Thou hast begun in me, be pleased to accomplish and perfect it until the day of Christ. Lord, Thou knowest my weakness, and the number and strength of those temptations I am to struggle with: O leave me not to myself; but cover

Thou my head in the day of battle, and in all my spiritual conflicts make me more than conqueror through Him that loved me. O let not the terrors or flatteries of the world, nor the deceitfulness of mine own corrupt heart, ever betray me to the breach of those promises which I have made to Thee this day: but grant that I may be so steadfast, unmovable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord, that I may in the end obtain that eternal life which Thou hast promised to those who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honor, and immortality. Grant this, O merciful Father, for the sake of my Blessed Saviour and Redeemer, Jesus Christ; who died for our sins, and rose again for our justification, and now sitteth at Thy right hand to make intercession for all penitent and

returning sinners. Amen.

– Richard Hele

Some Hints for Lent

A Pamphlet by the Rt. Rev. A.C.A. Hall, Bishop of Vermont, 1891

What mean ye by this service?" the Jewish child was to ask his parents in the yearly celebration of the Passover. Many who endeavor to "Keep Lent" lose much of the profit they should derive from its observance, because they have not clearly before them the object and purpose of the season.

The recurrence of Lent is a call to renewed spiritual effort. This is the great object of the Lenten Season, that we may "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ" (2 S. Peter iii. 18). To this end all its exercises are to be directed. The chief duties of Lent, to be undertaken with this Purpose constantly in mind, are Retirement, Prayer, Fasting, Repentance, and Almsgiving.

We Are Bidden at this Season...

...to follow our Lord, in some measure, into the wilderness, and give a few weeks to a closer inquiry into the state of our souls, and a nearer approach to God. We cannot, nor ought we to, withdraw from the duties of our state of life, whether in the family or in business. The retirement to which we are called is from the unrestrained social intercourse and from the amusements which at other times may be perfectly innocent, and even beneficial, but which we now put aside for a time, in order to give ourselves the better to higher and more important interests. It would be well to make a rule not to go during Lent to any place of public amusement, and, as far as possible, to keep from social entertainments. Try to be sometimes alone. "Commune with your own heart, and in your chamber, and be still:" this is one great rule for Lent. Secure time, and freedom of mind, for prayer, for the study of God's Word, for self-examination, and the works of repentance, and for gaining instruction in religious matters.

Many persons remain in ignorance of much that they ought to know concerning Christian faith and practice, because they do not take pains to gain instruction. Persons often in these days are bewildered by some infidel objection or argument which is brought before them, and which, even if they cannot directly answer, they should, by their assurance of the positive truth of their religion, be able to



withstand. For our own sake, for the sake of others whom we may help, and for the honor of our Lord, we ought to be ready with meekness and reverence, as St. Peter bids us, to give to every man that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us (1 S. Peter ii. 15). While carefully avoiding a controversial spirit it would be well in Lent to take in hand some instructive religious reading (e. g. of Church History), as well as that which is more distinctly devotional. Some time might be saved from newspapers and other light reading for this purpose.

Lent is a time for frequent Prayer...

...for both public and private.

A. Public Prayer--Make a conscientious use of the opportunities provided for you in your own Parish. Very likely you cannot attend all the services. It may not be desirable that you should do so. Services of different characters and at different times are intended to meet the needs of various classes of persons. You will probably find it best to choose some one or more courses of services (as the daily prayers, or weekly service and instruction), and make a rule of regular attendance at these. If you are in a large city, where there are several churches, be on your guard against the danger of religious dissipation, going about with itching ears to hear different preachers, or to take part in different services, moved rather by curiosity than by devotion or a desire for edification. If a Communicant, you may well desire to receive the Sacrament more frequently during this season. Abstaining from earthly food, and from social pleasures, you may approach more often the Holy Table to feed upon the Bread of Life, and hold communion with your Lord. No general rule can of course be given about the frequency of Communion. Each person must decide the question (with

the help of such advice as he can get), according to his own needs and opportunities.

If not yet admitted to Holy Communion, or if you should have ceased to be a Communicant, remember that one special purpose of your Lent should be by a true repentance (concerning which some hints will be given presently) to be prepared worthily to receive the Holy Sacrament at Easter. If we are rightly to commemorate our Lord's Passion, the atoning death of the spotless Lamb of God Who taketh away the sins of the world, we must "shew forth His Death" according to His commandment, pleading in His own appointed way His Sacrifice as the ground of our hopes, and seeking to have its merits applied individually to ourselves. In the typical Sacrifice of the Passover, the lamb was not only to be slain, but for any to share in the benefits of the sacrifice the blood of the victim must be sprinkled upon their house, and they must feed upon its flesh (Ex. .ii.). "Christ our Paschal Lamb is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the feast" (i Cor. v. 7, 8). If you have not been confirmed, you should in Lent set yourself distinctly to prepare, both intellectually and morally, for that holy rite, that by the Seven-fold Gift of the Holy Spirit you may be strengthened for your Christian life, and be ready to receive the spiritual food of the Body and Blood of Christ.

B. Private Prayer.--Do not let anything hinder from (nothing can take the place of) private personal communion with God. It would be very helpful to make a rule to pray over, for a few minutes, quietly in your room, and on your knees, each sermon and instruction that you hear. How many good impressions fade away and are lost for want of subsequent and prayerful recollection, by which they should have developed into deliberate resolves, and so have been found fruitful in our lives The fowls of the air are too often allowed to snatch away (even at the Church porch) the good seed which has been sown.

Be careful to say your regular prayers with earnestness and devotion, adding, perhaps, morning or night, one or other of the Seven Penitential Psalms (vi, xxxii, xxxviii, li, cii, cxxx, cxliii), and one or more of the Ash-Wednesday collects from the Prayer Book. In the use of such prayers you will unite your private devotions with the penitential prayers and exercises of the Holy Church throughout the world at this common fast of Christendom. Lent is a good time to begin or take up a fresh practice of meditation or the devotional use of Holy Scripture, reading and praying over a few verses, as one miracle or parable of our Lord, or one mystery in His Passion, and begging God to apply its lessons to yourself.

Most persons could give a few minutes each day during Lent to this practice, and by its means would certainly be enabled to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. In making any rule for this practice, it is better to devote a certain time (say five, ten, or thirty minutes, as you may be able), rather than to resolve to read a certain quantity.

All the Forty Days of Lent...

...the Prayer Book tells us, are to be observed with "such a measure of abstinence as is more especially suited to extraordinary acts and exercises of devotion." Fasting is intended

- 1) To subdue the flesh to the spirit;
- 2) To express sorrow and humiliation, acknowledging ourselves undeserving freely to partake of God's good gifts, and avenging past wrongful indulgence;
- 3) To quicken the soul for prayer.

For all these purposes God's servants under both the Old and the New Dispensation have practiced bodily mortification; nor can we without grievous fault and loss disregard a practice enjoined by our Lord's own example and constant teaching. All should form some rule for bodily discipline. Such a rule must vary with different persons, occupations, temperament and strength. It must not interfere with health, but should be such as to be really felt. All but very few could resolve to eat more sparingly and of a plainer diet, and to abstain during Lent from luxuries. Many perhaps by making a rule to rise somewhat earlier than usual would at once combat sloth and gain undisturbed time for devotion.

Amidst the enervating luxuries of our modern civilization it is especially incumbent on Christian people to learn to endure hardness.

"What a shame," exclaimed a holy man of old, "to be the soft and luxurious member of a Head that was crowned with thorns!"

In Lent especially, when we commemorate first the Fast and then the Passion of our Lord, the Church, His mystical Body would have her members in sympathy with the suffering experiences of His natural Body, now much of the excess, intemperance and sensuality that among all classes bring disgrace on a so-called Christian land may be traced to the softness and absence of discipline of which perhaps we have boasted as the sign of Christian liberty, though in direct violation of the example and precept of Christ!

If the Word of God, the example of our Lord, the practice of His Church, the experience of His saints, and our own so far as we have followed in their steps, are to be of any weight, we must, if we would grow in grace and in the knowledge and love of God, set ourselves to mortify the flesh with its affections and lusts. It is by the practice of self-denial with regard to things that may be innocent that we gain the power of self-control, and are enabled at once to say No when tempted to some unlawful action.

It is not of course the body only that needs control, though that in the disordered condition of our fallen nature is the cause of many sins. There must be a universal *self*-denial, including the discipline of our words, our tempers, our thoughts, our will. We must seek by degrees to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

Repentance is the Great Work of Lent

"Turn ye even to Me," saith the Lord, "with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning." (Joel ii. 12).

"Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him: and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" (Isa. liv. 6, 7).

The work of Repentance in its several parts of self-examination, sorrow for sin, confession of sin, amendment and satisfaction, cannot be better summed up than in the weighty words of the exhortation in preparation for Holy Communion in the Prayer-Book. Those who would find acceptance with God are therein bidden:--"First, to examine your lives and conversations by the rule of God's commandments: and whereinsoever ye shall perceive yourselves to have offended either by will, word, or deed, there to bewail your own sinfulness, and to confess yourselves to Almighty God with full purpose of amendment of life. And if ye shall perceive your offences to be such as are not only against God, but also against your neighbors; then ye shall reconcile yourselves unto them, being ready to make restitution and satisfaction, according to the uttermost of your powers, for all injuries and wrongs done by you to any other; and being likewise ready to forgive others who have offended you, as ye would have forgiveness of your offences at God's hand."

With regard to Self-Examination, consider not only your past life, hut also your present state before God, the real condition of your soul in His sight: consider the graces and virtues that should adorn it, as well as the vices that actually disfigure it. Be definite in your examination and in all your repentance.

"I so run, not as uncertainly: so fight I, not as one that beateth the air," said the Apostle, (i Cor. ix. 26). Many of those who are really trying to serve God would have to say of themselves if they truly described their manner of struggle, "I run indeed but very uncertainly"--not keeping in view the goal to be reached, and stretching continually toward it, with no particular virtue that I am striving for, no definite standard before me; "so fight I just like one that beateth the air," spending my strength in vain because I do not clearly see the enemy with whom I have to contend, and against whom I ought to direct my blows. Find out your besetting sin or sins, the faults into which you most commonly fall, that are at the root of most evil in your life, the habits that more particularly hinder and mar your Christian life. Set yourself during Lent in good earnest to combat these. Concentrate the force of your prayers, your self-denials, your sacraments upon these strongholds of the enemy within you.

What evil habit, ask yourself, am I specially to grapple with this Lent? What virtue in particular am I to cultivate?

The Seven Capital Sins (so called because under one or other of these heads of evil all possible sins whether of thought, word, or deed, can be classified) are sometimes more helpful than the Ten Commandments as an outline for self-examination, because we are thus enabled to trace the symptoms of evil (condemned by God's commands) to the roots of evil horn which they spring. Pride, Envy, Anger are more especially the works of the devil; Covetousness, the worldly sin; and Lust, Gluttony, Sloth, the sins of the flesh. The capital sins are the development



of the three-fold root of evil, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, which draw away from the love of God (i St. John ii. 16).

The knowledge of our sins must be followed by a humble Confession of them before Almighty God, with a true sorrow for the offence we have thereby committed against Him, and a sincere purpose of amendment. There can hardly be a better form of confession, if one be needed, than the General Confession in the Service for Holy Communion, if we say it in the singular number, slowly, and pausing at the end of each clause, to recall our own special transgressions, and to let the words we repeat find a real echo in our hearts. Concerning the special further confession of our sins to God in the presence of His Priest, the exhortation which has been already quoted thus concludes; "Because it is requisite that no man should come to the Holy Communion, but with a full trust in God's mercy, and with a quiet conscience, therefore, if there be any of you, who by this means [of private personal repentance] cannot quiet his own conscience herein, but requireth further comfort or counsel, let him come to me [the Parish Priest], or to some other minister of God's Word, and open his grief; that he may receive such godly counsel and advice as may tend to the quieting of his conscience, and the removing of all scruple and doubtfulness."

Let none whose consciences are troubled, either with the burden of past sin or with evil habits from which they find themselves unable to break free, shrink from seeking the help and assistance of those whom (as Richard Hooker puts it) "our Lord Jesus Christ hath left in His Church to be

spiritual and ghostly physicians, the guides and pastors of redeemed souls, whose office doth not only consist in general persuasions unto amendment of life, but also in the private, particular cure of diseased minds." The bringing home to the individual soul of God's pardoning word may be of unspeakable comfort to the penitent, while the personal guidance of one accustomed to deal with spiritual things may be of great value to a soul in struggling against temptations. Among "works of repentance" by no means forget the necessity of reparation for wrong done and of the forgiveness of injuries suffered, if we are to be ourselves at peace with God. Take care that you incur not the rebuke of the prophet, "Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness" (Isa. lviii. 4). Put away in Lent the leaven of malice and wickedness that you may celebrate the Paschal feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (i Cor. v. 8).

Almsgiving is Another Special Duty...

...of Lent. Some of the money which is saved from luxuries, from amusements, and from dress, should be devoted to pious and charitable purposes. Some of the time which is rescued from society may be well employed in works of mercy and kindly offices to those in spiritual and temporal need. "Break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor" (Dan. v. 27).

"Is not this the fast that I have chosen, saith the Lord, to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?" (Isa. lviii. 6, 7). We may think of Lent as being spent under the teaching of St. John the Baptist. First he preaches Repentance, drawing the people after him into the wilderness, bringing home the conviction of sin, leading to confession, and enjoining works meet for repentance. Then to those thus prepared the Baptist pointed out Jesus as the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world (St. Matt, iii., St. Luke iii., St. John i. 29).

Having in the earlier weeks of Lent endeavored to deepen our repentance we too in Passion-tide are pointed to the Saviour and His Cross, that we may behold at once sin's work and its remedy. It is at the foot of the Cross that the great lessons of the Christian life are to be learned. Remember that the Son of God was given to be both a sacrifice for sin and also an ensample of godly life. Seek more truly to die with Him to sin that with and in Him you may rise to newness of life.

Three Dangers to Guard Against

Three dangers we ought specially to guard against, lest we lose the benefit of Lenten observance.

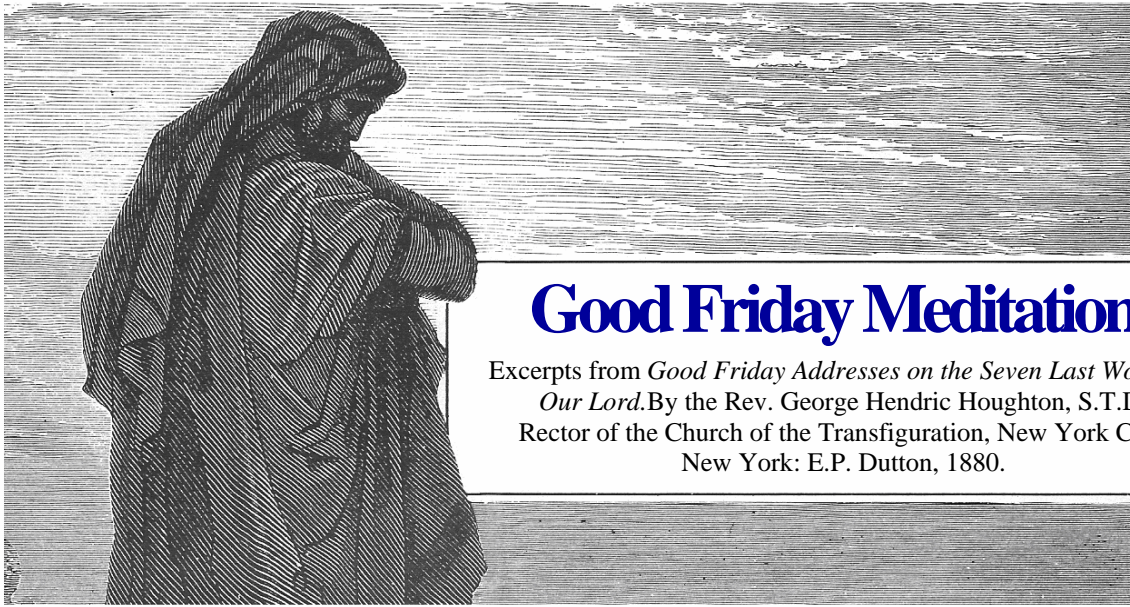
- 1) Avoid formality; whatever measure of strictness you may be able to adopt, be real.
- 2) Avoid aimlessness; be definite in your purpose and endeavors.
- 3) Avoid gloominess; there should be a true joy even in penitence, since in penitence we are returning to Him Whose love has borne with us and recalls us to Himself.

The end of this, as of every, commandment is charity, the love of God above all on account of His own intrinsic worth, and of our brethren for His sake, out of a pure heart, cleansed by grace, and a good conscience, set at peace by true repentance, and of faith unfeigned, and strengthened by spiritual exercises, (i Tim. i. 5).

- Hall



Book Excerpt



Good Friday Meditations

Excerpts from *Good Friday Addresses on the Seven Last Words of Our Lord*. By the Rev. George Hendric Houghton, S.T.D.
Rector of the Church of the Transfiguration, New York City.
New York: E.P. Dutton, 1880.

It is, indeed, a day for kneeling, as never at another time, at the foot of the cross, and confessing and bewailing our sinfulness and our sins. It is a day for endeavoring to realize, as on no other day, that He who hangs upon that cross is the one and only atonement for that sinfulness and those sins; that in Him there is pardon and salvation for us and for all men.

It is a day for renouncing one by one the sins of our lives past, our pride, our coldness and hardness of heart, our rash and idle words, our filial impiety, our anger and malice, our impurity, our dishonesty, our untruthfulness, our covetousness and for praying that in our poor measure we may be enabled ever hereafter to walk in the blessed steps of the most holy life of Him who was truth, and patience, and tenderness, and spotless purity, who was silent before His accusers, who did humble Himself even to the death upon the cross, and even when dying could be mindful of the needs of his mother.

It is also indeed a day when, if we have eyes that can weep, hearts that can feel, bosoms that can swell with pity and compassion for the woes and sufferings of a fellow-man, ours should be the bitterness and fullness of grief and the tenderness of sympathy for Him who, as on this day by His bitter passion and death upon the cross, redeemed us from the everlasting bitterness of eternal death. It is a day when we should heed the call which we are so soon to hear made to us, as it were, by the Mother of our Lord:

"O come and mourn with me awhile;
O come ye to the Saviour's side;
O come, together let us mourn;
Jesus, our Lord, is crucified."

It is, too, Indeed a Day We Should...

...pour forth the fullness of our love and gratitude, as never on another day, to Him who lived us and gave Himself for us. But it is a day for something more than penitence, and pity, and love. It is a day for the lowliest adoration, for the highest worship. If it be, indeed, God that hangs upon the cross, God that is dying for us, what utmost homage is there that is meet enough for us to offer to him? Surely it is the day when as never on another the words should go up from our lips and from our hearts: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto the Lamb forever and ever." Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ. Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father. "Crucified! we Thee adore!"

"To Christ, who won for sinners grace,
By bitter grief and anguish sore,
Be praise from all the ransomed race,
Forever and for evermore."

Let us fail not then, that in our private hallowing and observance of this day, there be indeed paid unto Christ our God such homage, such adoration, such worship, as on scarcely another. Throughout all the year, brethren, there are no such hours, hours so memorable, so solemn, so sacred, so awful--hours in which every heart should be so full of love and sorrow and sympathy and devoutest thankfulness--in which sin should seem so utterly horrible and detestable, and the divine compassion and mercy so infinite and wonderful--hours which we should so desire entirely to give up and to consecrate to our only Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ--as the three ensuing hours, the hours from twelve until three of this day. For, consider, they are the hours in which the work of our redemption, and the redemption of all mankind, by that only Lord and Saviour,

Jesus Christ, was accomplished. They are the hours in which the otherwise irremediable ruin wrought by the sin of our first parents for themselves and for all our race, was by the Second Adam, our only Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, forever retrieved--and the way opened for us and for all our race by Him into a Paradise, which, if gained, as it might be, should never be forfeited, and in which the joys ten thousand fold of that first Eden should be forever found; but the hours in which that ruin was retrieved and that way was opened, as only they could be, by such awful and unmitigated torments of the body and soul of that, only Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, as in all the universe and throughout all eternity, was never hitherto known and experienced, nor ever shall be here after.

They are the hours in which, after that night of agony and betrayal and desertion, and that morning of scoffing and spitting and scourging and smiting with the reed and crowning with the thorns, and dragging, as if He had been the very felon of the earth, from the one end of Jerusalem to the other, and of false accusal and unjust condemnation, and bearing of the cross up the steep of Calvary until he fell beneath its weight, that He hung upon it, between Heaven and Earth, supported by the nails driven through His hands and His feet, with the thorns lacerating His head at every uneasy turning for a moment's relief--a spectacle to men and to angels. And they are the hours, when, with the scorching rays of the midday sun of that burning Eastern sky beating down upon his bare, bleeding, broken, crucified body--dying amid the sneers and deridings of the hostile multitude, and with a thief on either side, there was laid upon Him the intolerable burden of the iniquity of us all, the weight of every sin that had been committed or that should be committed by any one of our race--when He experienced in His own person on the tree the concentration of the punishment forever due to the sins of the whole world, and made an all sufficient and everlasting atonement for them--when the face of the Father was hidden from Him, and all the fiendish malevolence of all the powers of darkness, without let or hindrance, exercised itself upon Him.

We Have Come Together...

...to employ [these hours] as best we can--to try to devote them, to give them entirely up, to the crucified--in them to offer unto Him our adoring love and gratitude: as we kneel at the foot of His cross to consecrate ourselves, body, soul, and spirit, all that we have and all that we are, anew unto Him and unto His service--to ask Him to take us, and to make us and to keep us, poor, wretched, utterly unworthy as we are, His wholly and forever, and to help us each day of our life hereafter to do something that shall testify to the sincerity of the love that we bear to Him, and to the sense that we have of our infinite and everlasting indebtedness to Him.

Blessed Jesus, as we behold Thee being nailed to the cross, and listen to Thy words, we pray Thee that we may evermore be unselfish, mindful of others in all our trials and afflictions, be they never so severe; ever ready to

forgive and to seek forgiveness; and ever guided and governed by the Holy Spirit in striving to speak and to do only that which is right, and the influence of which may be for the good of others.

Merciful and adorable Jesus, Thou who when dying didst promise Paradise to the dying, penitent thief, kneeling at the foot of Thy cross this day, we ask Thee to look upon us just as we are; there is no sin that we would keep back from Thee, for we desire that all may this day be forgiven, and we desire that we may be willing here after to suffer and to have our faith tried even as Thou wilt; if so be we may at the last be with Thee in Paradise, it matters not through what we pass in going thither.

There is probably no such intolerable craving as that of thirst. It is related that Alexander the Great, once making a long journey with his army through the deserts, after long drought and thirst, came to a certain river; and the soldiers began to drink the water with such eagerness that many choked themselves and died on the spot--the number that so perished being far greater than was lost in any war. The burning thirst was so intolerable that the soldiers could not restrain themselves, that they might breathe a little between drinking (Bellarmine). There is nothing that so aggravates thirst, intolerable as it might be from a mere protracted want of water, as loss of blood, and exhaustion from fatigue. It is told of one of the martyrs that, when bound to the stake and receiving many wounds, he complained only of thirst; and of another person, stricken by many wounds from which the blood flowed profusely, that he longed for nothing but drink, as if he suffered no harm but the most burning thirst.

In the agony of the preceding night our Lord's blood had been forced from His veins, and had fallen in great drops to the ground. In that pitiless scourging and crowning with thorns in this early morning, how must He again have been bathed in His gore. From those more and more distending wounds in His hands, and from the hole which the cruel nail had torn through His feet, for three weary hours the blood had been welling. And then let us think how utterly worn and weary the dear Lord of us all must have been when He came to the cross. He had tasted neither food nor drink since the supper of the night before, nor had He slept since we know not when. He had been rudely dragged and hustled along, jeered and mocked by the way, from the garden to the house of Annas, from the house of Annas to that of Caiaphas, from the house of Caiaphas to the Judgment Hall of Pilate, from the Judgment Hall to the Palace of Herod, from the Palace back again to Pilate--and then scourged and crowned with thorns, and tottering under the weight of the heavy cross, He had been urged to go faster and faster up the steep of Calvary until He stumbled and fell. Surely, surely, when He said "I thirst," there must have been a significance in the words, which they scarcely ever had when spoken by another; and throat, and tongue, and mouth, and lips must have been parched as those of scarcely ever another.

Shall We Not Learn a Lesson?

And, dear brethren, shall we not learn a lesson in Christian fortitude as we think of this, and as we hear these words from the cross to-day? Some thing at least to shame us out of our constant complaining and impatience? Does a single day of our life go and the things the most trivial, a want ungratified at the moment of its arising, a temporary discomfort, a pain not worthy a thought, even the vicissitudes of sky and temperature, not provoke our

impatience and complaining? And yet it is in the daily routine of trivial matters that we are to show our likeness unto Christ. Our payer book tells us that there should be no greater comfort to Christian persons than to be made like unto Christ, by suffering *patiently* adversities, troubles, and sicknesses. If then our lives be too much lives of complaining and querulousness--making much of little--from this day forth let them be so no more. Let us be brave, enduring, reticent, in some poor measure like to our Master. ✍

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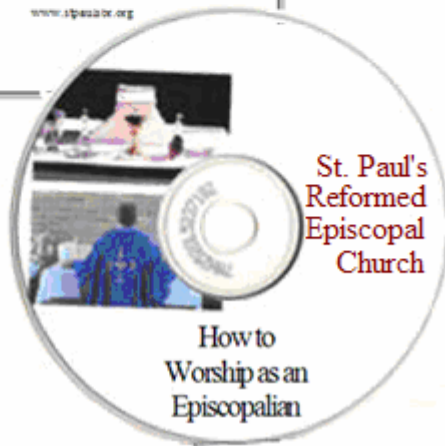
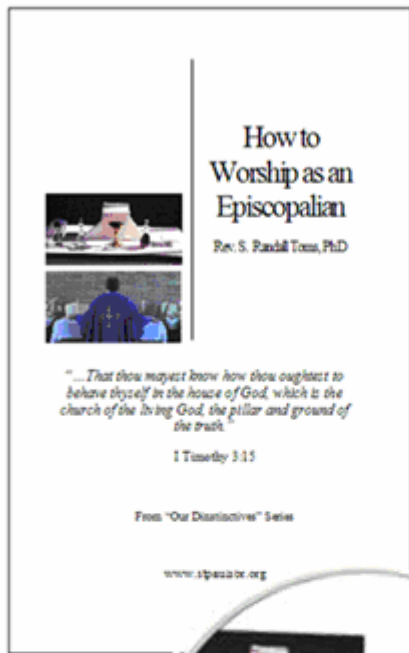
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by Rev. S. Randall Toms, PhD

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Thoughts on Lent for Busy People

By E.F. Pemberton

The word Lent means "Spring;" we use it now when we speak of the spring fast--the forty days before Easter Day--I mean forty days not including Sundays, for Sundays are never fast days. Does the word "fast" frighten you? Does it mean something hard, something very distasteful, or perhaps something that does not concern you at all? If so, it is because you have not yet learnt for yourself (as I hope you will this Lent) its true meaning and happiness. This is the invitation which our LORD sends to each one of us this Lent--listen to His Voice, and then read the following hymn. *Jesus speaks*, "Come ye yourselves (*mention your own name*) apart into a desert place, and rest awhile." Read this hymn.

*With tender look, and voice of thrilling grace,
The SAVIOUR once to His disciples said,
"Come ye apart into a desert place.
And rest awhile the aching heart and head."
He says so still to all who are His own,
To all weary with the world's sad strife,
"Come, spend with me a little while alone,
Leave the hot fever and the fret of life.
"Come from the world's hard struggle and its din,
Discords that pain the ear and never cease,
Wild stormy passions, tumults of man's sin,
Which put to shame the angel's song of peace.
"Come, when perplexed by doubt or anxious fear,
And I will make dark things all clear and plain,
Will shed the light of hope on dull despair,
And give true peace where now is only pain."
C. D. Bell.*

Yes; JESUS is calling you and me into a "desert place"--"desert" because for a time, at least, we shall give up some earthly joys; but what wonderful joy instead--if we go into this desert place, we shall find JESUS there! It is to rest awhile with Hint that He calls us. Let us now divide our thoughts under three headings, viz.: 1) Why we should fast or practise self-denial; 2) About some of the ways in which Satan will try to hinder our fasting; 3) Of some ways in which even the busiest of us can fast or deny ourselves.

✦ **Why Fast** - The greatest reason of all is, *because Jesus fasted*. And all that JESUS did, we, His followers, must try to imitate. There is a poem by George Herbert which says: "*Who goes the way that CHRIST hath gone, Is much more like to meet with Him, Than one, who journeys by byways.*" JESUS fasted for forty days. Shall we refuse to imitate Him? No; let us each one resolve "to go the way that CHRIST hath gone," that is the only right way for us. The **Church**, too, bids us fast. If you look in your Prayer Book you will find that, among other fast days, the forty days of Lent are set apart to be observed by every member of the Church. If we do not fast we are not trying to imitate Jesus; we are disobeying the Church.

✦ **Hindrances to Fasting** - The devil does not like us to fast. Why? Because he knows too well that if we fast we are stronger in grace, we are more able to resist his temptations. The devil is sure to come to you if you fast. He came, you know, to our LORD, when He fasted, to tempt Him, and he still comes to us, His followers. He tempts us in **different** ways; some he tempts to irritability of temper, making them perform their acts of self-denial grudgingly, making them cross and gloomy because of their self-denial, thus making the self-denial lose its whole value, for what we decide to give up, we must give up cheerfully, as a loving offering to GOD in sorrow for our sins. Some he tempts in an opposite way, he makes the fasting seem very easy and delightful, so those persons are

tempted to think, "How good I must be to give up all so easily;" thus, as in the first case, spoiling the whole value of those acts of self-denial, for any pride is as a scorching sun which takes all freshness from our acts and makes them utterly unworthy to be offered to GOD. If we are tempted in this way, let us increase our self-denial, and dedicate each act to GOD, saying, "LORD, help me to do this to show my love to Thee, help me through this to be stronger in my fight against sin, and especially the deadly sin of spiritual pride."

✦ **Some Rules of Fasting or Self-denial** - I want you either to make some rules for yourself, or to choose two or three from the following list. (Of course those who work hard, or are delicate, must not deny themselves in the quantity of food they take, for that would unfit them for the work which is their duty, or would increase their delicacy.) Get a notebook and write down at the beginning the rules you intend to keep, numbered 1, 2, 3, etc., and then make a little table like this at the beginning of each week, and then at the end of each day read your resolutions, and ask yourself after each one if you have kept it. If you can answer "Yes," put a mark like this (i) in the space you have made for your first resolution mark; if "No," put a mark like this (o) instead. You will find this little plan a great help to you for making you careful in keeping resolutions. You can choose, if you like, one or more rules from each of the following sets. It is right for our Lent resolutions to include Fasting, Almsgiving, and Prayer.

✦ **Fasting or Self-denial** - Not to eat sweet things; not to eat salt, pepper, or mustard; Not to take sugar in tea, etc; to eat no meat on one or two days in the week; not to read amusing papers or books.

✦ **Almsgiving** - To give to GOD what you would have spent in sweet things, sugar, etc; to make up your mind to do some little thing, **strictly** to please another, every day.

✦ **Prayer** - To get up five minutes, or more, earlier, and to give that five minutes to special prayer or religious reading; to practise (if it is not already your custom) short prayer at midday; to use the **collect for** Ash Wednesday every day; to read a short Lent reading every day. In making these resolutions, do not let us forget the real object of our fast. We deny ourselves to subdue our bodies, so that our spiritual life may increase. We fast that we may be stronger to fight against our besetting sin, our bad habits, and faults. If you do not know, find out at once what is your besetting sin, i.e., the sin you most frequently commit; fight hard against it, and pray for the opposite virtue every day. For instance-- Is it Pride? Pray for Humility. Is it Anger? Pray for Gentleness. Is it Sloth? Pray for Diligence. Is it over-anxiety? Pray for trust in GOD. Is it impurity in thought, word, or deed? Pray for purity, and resolve at once to give up all bad companions, books, or conversation--anything which you know encourages this sin.

Spring time is such a helpful time, everything reminds us of growth: the trees budding, the flowers coming into bloom, the birds building their nests, all nature becoming more and more beautiful. O may GOD find that same growth of beauty in our souls by Eastertide! One word more. Do not get discouraged if you feel it is a "desert place." It is hard to give up even very small earthly pleasures. If you fail, do not give up in despair, try again. JESUS will be there to help you.

"Well I know thy trouble, O my servant true; Thou art very weary, I was weary too; But that toil shall make thee Some day all Mine own. And the end of sorrow Shall be near My Throne."

The Anglican Tradition Press

NEW RELEASES



The Scriptural Foundations: of The Book of Common Prayer

by Rev. S. Randall Toms, PhD

Almost all of the wording of The Book of Common Prayer comes directly from the Bible. In this sermon, Fr. Toms carries you through parts of the Prayer Book and the Bible, showing you how Scriptural the language of the Prayer Book really is. After reading this sermon, you will understand that when you are praying from the Prayer Book, you are praying the Scriptures.

The Biblical Basis for Set Forms of Prayer

by Rev. S. Randall Toms, PhD

Many people believe that extemporaneous praying is more spiritual than praying the prayers that the Church has left us, such as those contained in the Book of Common Prayer. Some think that when praying prayers from a book, a person is not really praying from the heart. In this sermon, Fr. Toms shows that praying set prayers written by others has a Scriptural foundation, and how praying from the Prayer Book can be one of the most spiritually liberating forms of prayer that you will ever find.

The Sacrament of Confirmation

by Rev. S. Randall Toms, PhD

For many people Confirmation has become little more than a cultural custom, or merely the time when a person makes an "adult" profession of faith. In this sermon, Fr. Toms shows the supernatural event that actually takes place when the Bishop lays his hands on the person to receive the seven-fold gifts of the Holy Spirit.

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A Guide for Self-Examination

By the Rev. Dr. S. Randall Toms

*Vicar, St. Paul's Reformed Episcopal Church,
Baton Rouge, Louisiana.*



One of the duties of the Lenten season is self-examination. This discipline requires that we examine ourselves by the light of God's word. When we examine ourselves by Holy Scripture, we are sometimes convicted of those sins that we had not realized we were committing. At times, we come face to face with those sins that we do not want to confess or forsake. Self-examination also reveals those sins that we have kept hidden, not only from others, but from ourselves.

The purpose of this self-examination is not that we might merely feel guilty about our sins. Rather, the purpose of this self-examination is to break our hearts and humble us so that we might seek forgiveness from our Savior, Jesus Christ. Also, this self-examination will help to convince us of our need for the power of the Holy Spirit to enable us to wrestle, fight, overcome, and forsake these sins. After examining yourself, do not allow the knowledge of your sinfulness to cause you to despair. Rather, use this knowledge to drive you to Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. After you have thoroughly examined yourself, ask God to work in your heart, by the power of the Holy Spirit, a true sorrow and hatred for all your sins so that you might forsake them and strive against them all your life. Realize that if you truly repent and turn to Christ, he will forgive you all your trespasses. After examining yourself, it would be a good idea to pray the General Confession:

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father; We have erred, and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against thy holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; And we have done those things which we ought not to have done; And there is no health in us. But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders. Spare thou those, O God, who confess their faults. Restore thou those who are penitent; According to thy promises declared unto

mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord. And grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake; That we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, To the glory of thy holy Name. Amen.

One of the best ways to examine ourselves is by the light of that summary of God's moral law contained in the Ten Commandments. The following is a guide to help you examine yourself by these Ten Words. After each commandment I have listed others examples of questions to ask yourself to determine if you have been living in disobedience to these holy commandments. These questions are not comprehensive or exhaustive, but they may give you some idea as to the kinds of questions you may ask yourself. Depending on your circumstances and duties, spend as much time as you feel necessary to examine yourself. Some may want to spend an hour, while some may want to spend a much longer time in this discipline; but try to set some time apart that you can be alone with God and ask for His mercy to reveal to you those ways that you are sinning against Him. As always, before you begin self-examination, pray with the Psalmist, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

1. Thou Shalt Have None Other Gods But Me

Do I love and serve the one, true, and living God as he is revealed in Holy Scripture? Have I rejected all other gods, all other religions, and accepted the fact that the only way of salvation is through Jesus Christ? Do I seek to obey him in all things, rather than following the dictates of my own imagination or the standards of the world? Do I meditate upon him frequently so that I love, adore, reverence, and rejoice in him above all things in this world? Is it my greatest desire to please him, or do I often disobey him because I want the love and approval of others more than I want the praise of God?

2. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image

Do I worship God only in those ways that are not prohibited by Holy Scripture. Do I love the worship of God? Do I desire to worship him in spirit and in truth? Do I do all that I can to promote and support the true worship of God. Have I made an idol in my heart by worshipping a god with whom I can be pleased, rather than the God who is revealed in holy Scripture? Do I accept only those attributes of God that please me, rather than the full revelation of all the attributes of God that we find in the Bible? Are my ideas and opinions of God based on the views of the modern, surrounding culture, or on Scripture?

3. Thou Shalt Not Take The Name Of The Lord In Vain

Do I use the name of God in an irreverent or superstitious manner? Do I live in such a manner that the name of God is blasphemed or held in contempt because of my actions? Do I fail to perform the promises and vows I have made in the name of God? Since I bear the name of Christ, do I profane his name by hypocritical actions? Do I speak with contempt for God by murmuring and complaining about the wise, providential ordering of my life? Have I failed to glorify his name by not worshiping him and loving him with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength?

4. Remember That Thou Keep Holy The Sabbath Day

Do I worship God in his Church every Sunday unless providentially hindered? Do I prepare my heart all during the week for the wonderful celebration of the Lord's Day? Do I make it a point to work diligently to have all my worldly affairs completed in the other six days in the week so that I might observe the Lord's Day without distractions? Do I prepare my heart and mind for the worship of God, by special prayers on Saturday evening and Sunday morning? Do I make it a point to enter the house of God with the proper reverence? Do I make sure that my family is prepared for the worship of God on the Lord's Day? When in the house of God, do I sing, pray, and listen to the word of God with all my heart and soul? Am I frequently careless and thoughtless during the time of worship? Do I consider the worship of God to be dull and boring? Do I resent and complain about having to attend the worship of Almighty God? Do I prepare myself and my family for Holy Communion by a remembrance of all the benefits we receive by a worthy reception of it?

5. Honour Thy Father And Thy Mother

Do I show respect and reverence toward my parents in thought, word, and behavior? Do I give sincere, cheerful obedience to the lawful commands of my parents? Do I submit to the discipline of my parents without spite or resentment? Do I listen with respect to the advice and counsel of my parents? Do I ever reveal a spirit of disrespect toward my parents? Do I believe the Christian faith as it has been taught to me by my parents? Do I pray for my parents? Do I do what I can to provide for the needs of my parents when they are in physical, emotional, or spiritual distress?

6. Thou Shalt Do No Murder

Do I show the proper respect for the lives of others, realizing that they are created in the image of God? Am I guilty of hatred toward others? Am I guilty of sins, such as envy, a desire for revenge, unkind thoughts and words toward others, that might lead to the harming of another person? Have I caused others to have hateful or malicious thoughts toward their acquaintances? Do I take care of my own body as the temple of the Holy Spirit so that it might be a fit vessel for the Lord's use? Do I do what is within my power to preserve the lives of others?

7. Thou Shalt Not Commit Adultery

Do I strive for sexual purity in thought, speech, and behavior? Do I follow the Scriptural teaching that the only godly expression of sexuality is that between a married man and woman? Have I been faithful to my spouse in thought and behavior?

8. Thou shalt not steal

Do I take things that are not lawfully mine? Do I honor my vows and contracts? Am I honest in my business dealings with others? Do I withhold from my neighbor that which is rightfully his? Do I do all that is in my power to preserve and enhance the possessions of others? Do I rob God by not giving as I am able to the Church for the spreading of His kingdom? Do I give my employer my diligent service so that I am worthy of the wages paid? In my dealings with others, have I been guilty of fraud, falsehood, injustice, extortion, or bribery?

9. Thou Shalt Not Bear False Witness

Have I slandered the good name of my neighbor? Have I told lies or given false evidence? Have I concealed the truth when I should have spoken? Have I been guilty of malicious gossip that may have harmed my neighbor? Have I failed to correct others when they have told untruths about my neighbor?

10. Thou Shalt Not Covet

Have I been guilty of discontent when I look at the prosperity of others? Can I rejoice at the prosperity of others without being guilty of discontent and envy? You may wish to conclude this time of examination with the following prayer by John Bradford: *“Set my heart in the case of religion to acknowledge thee one God, to worship none other God, to reverence thy name, and to keep thy Sabbaths. Set my heart right in matters of human conversation, to honor my parents, to obey rulers, and reverence the ministry of the gospel; to have hands clean from blood, true from theft, a body free from adultery, and a tongue void of all offence. But purge the heart first, O Lord, and then the hand, the eye, the tongue, the foot, and all the whole body will be the cleaner. Write all these thy laws in my heart, O Lord, and in the hearts of all the faithful people; that we may believe them and keep them all the days of our lives, to thy glory and praise, through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.”*

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Next Issue:

Prayer Book Devotion

Some people are aware of the blessings of using the Book of Common Prayer for public worship, but many have not discovered its richness as a source for private and family devotion. In our next issue, we will explore the ways that Anglicans have used and studied the Prayer Book as a means of preparing for formal worship and enriching their walk with God day by day.

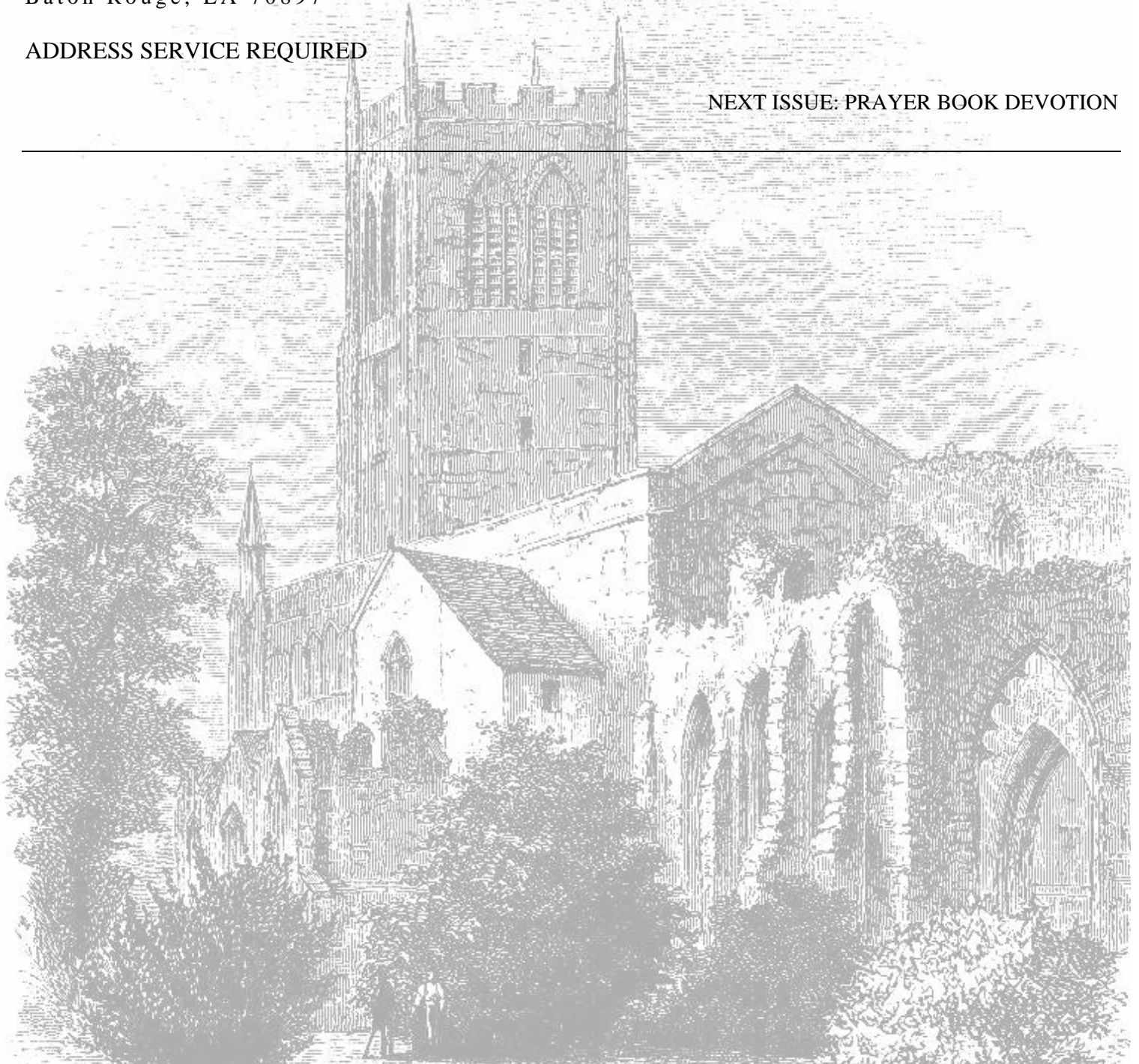
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NEXT ISSUE: PRAYER BOOK DEVOTION



**We beseech thee, Almighty God, mercifully to look upon thy people;
that by thy great goodness they may be governed and preserved
evermore, both in body and soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Amen

**Collect for 5th Sunday in Lent
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