

Gems of Thought



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EASTER-END OF TRINITY.

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GERMS OF THOUGHT

ON THE

SUNDAY SPECIAL SERVICES;

BEING THE

HARMONIZED TEACHING OF THE COLLECT,
EPISTLE, GOSPEL, AND FIRST LESSONS.

—♦—
Easter to end of Trinity.

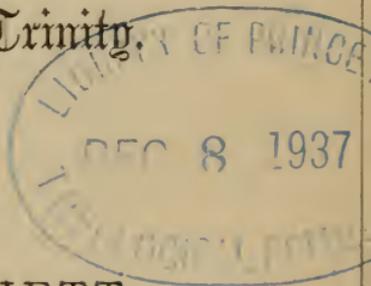
—♦—
BY THE

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First Sunday after Easter.

THE COLLECT.

ALMIGHTY FATHER, who hast given Thine only Son to die for our sins, and to rise again for our justification ; Grant us so to put away the leaven of malice and wickedness, that we may alway serve Thee in pureness of living and truth ; through the merits of the same Thy Son Jesus Christ. Amen.

THE EPISTLE	...	...	...	...	1 <i>John</i> v. 4.
THE GOSPEL	...	...	...	...	<i>John</i> xx. 19.
FIRST LESSONS	{	Morning	...	...	<i>Numbers</i> xvi.
		Evening	...	...	<i>Numbers</i> xxii.

THIS is called "Low Sunday," or Lower Easter Sunday ; for we are still celebrating the "Queen of Feasts ;" wherefore the same Collect was formerly repeated to-day, and the proper preface in the Holy Communion Office is ordered to be read "on Easter Day, and seven days after." Let us then endeavour by every means to keep up the spirit of our Easter joy ; but especially let us (as we are in the services of to-day continually called upon

to do) examine ourselves how far we have profited by the holy lessons we have lately been taught. Are we living like men for whom Christ has died, and risen again? Have we faith to see our Risen Saviour, and hear Him speaking to us, as to the Apostles during the great forty days, "of the things concerning the kingdom of God"?

I. The Epistle at once calls us to these practical reflections. Take the last words, which contain the sum and substance of the whole ;—"This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life ; and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life ; and he that hath not the Son hath not life." The Son of God came into the world, lived in self-denial and self-devotion, died on the cross, and rose again from the dead,—not only to give us higher and better notions of God, and of our own nature, not only to teach us what is God's mind towards us, and what kind of living will best please Him ; but to draw us to a higher and heavenly life in Himself. And He, our life, "came by water and blood" to us.

Our Baptism is a witness that we have been called to this Heavenly Life. The Lord's Supper is a witness to us that, through faith in the blood of Christ, we may every one

maintain it. The question then is, are we maintaining it, by serving God in pureness of living and truth? Or, are we refusing to rise up to it, or stifling it in "the leaven of malice and wickedness"?

A very plain test is offered us in the first words of the Epistle, "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." There is a world within, of "wickedness,"—evil thoughts and desires; and there is a world without, of "malice,"—sinful pleasures, and unlawful works. And this two-fold world can only be overcome by him who is born of God, by a true faith in His Son, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

II. The Collect rests upon two passages of St. Paul's Epistles. The first is at the end of the 4th chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, where he teaches that Christ Jesus "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." Our sins which He had undertaken to bear, necessitated His dying; His righteousness, which He came into the world to impart to us, necessitated His rising again from the dead. He died to save us from the dominion of sin: He rose to make us righteous before God. His death paid the price of our redemption, His resurrection

introduced us to the blessed state of the redeemed—"the glorious liberty of the children of God." It is very important that we should clearly understand this difference between the work of His death, and the work of His Resurrection. The other passage referred to, is 1 Cor. v. 7, 8; and a careful reading of the whole chapter will very clearly show us what St. Paul meant by the term "malice and wickedness."

Let it be carefully observed how the clauses in the latter part of the Collect answer to those of the former. Christ was given to "die for our sins;" therefore we must "put away the leaven of malice and wickedness;" in other words, we must be conformed to His death. Christ was given "to rise again for our justification;" therefore we must always "serve God in pureness of living and truth;" in other words, we must be "conformed to the likeness of His Resurrection."*

III. The First Lessons will serve to show us wherein the "leaven of malice and wickedness," which we pray God to put away, consists, and how it works.

1. In that of the Morning we read the sad story of Korah and his company, and of those who murmured on account of what happened

* Romans vi. 3.

to them. In both of these cases we see the working of the "leaven of malice," the open daring opposition of man's evil heart to the will of God. Moses was careful to remind them that their offence was not against himself and Aaron, but against the Lord; and the very nature of their punishment was intended to signify this. The root of their sin was self-will, rebellion against their invisible King. And must we not own that this is the root of the sins we have to contend against,—those sins which hinder the growth of our life in a risen Saviour, and destroy in us that faith which overcometh the world? And when we read of Aaron, how "he stood between the living and the dead, and the plague was stayed," can we fail to be reminded, for our comfort, of Jesus, our great Intercessor, for whose sake alone God's judgment against our repeated rebellions is stayed?

2. In Balaam, whose history we begin to read in this Evening's Lesson, we see the working of the "leaven of wickedness,"—the more secret, but none the less fatal, opposition of man's evil nature to the holy will of God. Balaam was a man with the knowledge, but without the love of God. His *eyes* were open, as he himself says; but his *heart* was closed. He longed after the evil which he feared to

do. He recognised the kingdom of God, and knew that it was drawing him, as all things, to itself; but he sought to bend it or bribe it to his own selfish ends. With the faith he had, he would not strive to "overcome the world;" but entered into a wicked compromise with it, "loving the wages of iniquity:" therefore the world *overcame him*, and at last destroyed him.

IV. Very comforting is it to turn from these sad examples to the Gospel. Almost we seem to hear the echo of those blessed words addressed to the disciples on the first Sunday after Easter, "Peace be unto you." They have passed on the Divine benediction from age to age: it is the substance of their preaching, and thus has come to us. "Peace be unto you." Peace with respect to the past; for Jesus died for our sins: peace with respect to the present and the future; for He rose again for our justification: peace in the world without; for faith in Him can overcome its evil: peace in the world within; for He who is our life is the Prince of Peace.

But let us not overlook the significance of the words that follow. "When He had said this, He breathed on them, and said, Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they

are retained." There is but one way to maintain that blessed gift of peace, which Jesus has bequeathed to us, and that is by the remission of our sins, the certain and everlasting enemies of Peace. And to this remission of sins, through the One Sacrifice of the One Priest, it is the work of His ordained ministers, by their preaching, and by every other means, to bring us.



FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

"The same day at evening . . . came Jesus and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you."—THE GOSPEL.

"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith."—THE EPISTLE.

Be with us, Lord, this holy Sabbath eve,
When far behind the noisy world we leave ;
Here in Thy house let fear and sorrow cease,
And o'er us breathe Thy blessed gift of peace.

Peace to the penitent, whose tearful prayer
Saves his weak soul from sinking to despair ;
Peace to the truthful minds, by doubt opprest,
And burdened hearts, that yearn for Thy sweet rest.

Peace to the widowed hearts that weep alone,
Willing in all Thy better will to own ;
Peace to the wanderers on life's dark sea,
Finding at last a guiding light in Thee.

Peace to the pure, the truthful, and the meek,
Who fear the world, and its salvation seek ;
Mighty to war, but with themselves the most ;
Thy name their strength, Thy cross their only boast.

O risen Saviour ! O triumphant Head !
Revive in us whate'er to Thee is dead :
Fight in us all, as for us Thou hast fought ;
Work in our lives the peace Thy death has brought.



Second Sunday after Easter.

THE COLLECT.

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 Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE EPISTLE	... ..	... ..	... ..	... ..	1 <i>Peter</i> ii. 19.
THE GOSPEL	... ..	... ..	... ..	... ..	<i>John</i> x. 11.
FIRST LESSONS	{	Morning	... ..	... ..	<i>Numbers</i> xxiii. xxiv.
		Evening	... ..	... ..	<i>Numbers</i> xxv.

IN the last address to sponsors, in the office for the Baptism of Infants, it is said that "Baptism doth represent unto us our profession ; which is, to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto Him ; that, as He died, and rose again for us, so should we, who are baptized, die from sin, and rise again unto righteousness ; continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt affections,

and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living." It will be found that the special services, both of the first and second Sundays after Easter, embody the same teaching. Very practical that teaching is. It sends our thoughts continually to the consideration of what we are, and how we ought to be living. We are not suffered to contemplate the death of Christ by *itself*, so as to rest in its benefits, without reference to other redemptive acts: but it is set before us in intimate connection with His resurrection and His example. For, as it would be little comfort to know that Christ died for us on the cross, unless by His resurrection He had given us an assurance that His work of atonement is accepted, and our access to the Father made plain; so it can be little comfort to know that we have received the inestimable benefit of His sacrifice for sin, if we are still devoting our lives to sin, and are not endeavouring "to follow the blessed steps of His most holy life."

I. That this is the nature of the teaching of the Collect needs hardly to be pointed out. Let it be observed, as in that for last Sunday, how clause answers to clause in the former and latter parts. God has given His only Son "to be unto us a sacrifice for sin," there-

fore must we “thankfully receive this His inestimable benefit.” Yes, and *prove* that we thankfully receive it, as by other means, so especially by faithfully, devoutly, and habitually commemorating it in that holy sacrament, which, as we say in the Catechism, was ordained for the continual remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ.

God gave His “only Son to be unto us an ensample of godly life;” to show us what kind of life man was made for, and God delights in; therefore must we “daily endeavour ourselves to follow the blessed steps of His most holy life.” We must needs fall miserably short of that great example; nevertheless we must keep it ever before us. And our *aim* in all things must be to come up to it.

II. The Epistle formed, we shall remember, the Second Lesson for Good Friday evening. No words could more touchingly draw our minds to the practical consideration of Christ’s death. St. Paul teaches us that “even hereunto were we called,” not that we might live in ease and self-indulgence, looking to Christ’s sacrifice to set us right with God at last; but that we might imitate the virtues which shone out so brightly in His life and death. “He, His own self, bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should

live unto righteousness." We were "as sheep going astray;" we had lost the Master of our lives; we had no one to bring us together, and guide us to the one fold. But we are now "returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls." Therefore we must give ourselves wholly to His governance and follow in His steps.

III. How strikingly the opening of the Gospel answers to the close of the Epistle! And, in connection with what has been said, how strongly do those most gracious words of Christ, so dear to all our hearts, constrain us to a holy life!—"The good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep." Does not the converse follow?—the sheep give their lives to the good Shepherd? He lays down His life for them; they lift up their lives to Him. He knows His sheep, ever moving up and down amongst them, protecting, guiding, feeding, helping them: pleading for them before His Father; comforting them by His Spirit. They know Him, looking unto Him by faith, praising His redeeming love, studying His words, and following His example.

IV. Such, then, being the teaching of the Collect, Epistle, and Gospel, we shall easily perceive the warning conveyed by the First Lessons.

1. Balaam, whose history again comes before us this morning, plainly revealed his whole mind and character in that prayer,—“Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.” His idea of righteousness is evidently the very shallowest that can be. He regards it as something good for a man *when he dies*, but not *a necessity of his every-day life*. He can only conceive of a righteous man as leading a charmed life, under the special favour of a superior Power, protected against all visible and invisible enemies, and having nothing to fear after death. In plain words, he would have secured “the inestimable benefit” of God’s covenant with His people without the “holy life” to which that covenant pledged them.

2. The Evening Lesson contains a very sad narrative; though to faithful minds there is a gleam of consolation at the end. Behold the people of whom Balaam had prophesied such glorious things, and whom God Himself had declared blessed, giving themselves up to the grossest sin and idolatry! The blessing of God upon them as a nation did not save them from bringing themselves under the curse of sin. No outward privileges availed them when they would not live in accordance with God’s law. God give us grace to take this

warning home to ourselves! His blessing rests upon us for the sake of Christ's death: but most assuredly shall we bring ourselves under His curse if we *will* not follow "the steps of His most holy life." Surely we may discern in Phinehas an instructive, albeit a faint type of Christ, expressing the whole teaching of this season. This true son of Aaron gave the strongest proof of indignation against the sin which had brought the holy nation under a curse, and thus turned away God's anger, and stayed the plague that was consuming them.

So Christ, in His death on the cross, showed His indignation against the sin which was destroying our race, and gave it its death-wound. And *His* is now the covenant of peace, the covenant of an "everlasting priesthood," because *He* made *the* atonement for the children of Israel and for all mankind.



SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

"The Shepherd of our souls."—GOSPEL AND EPISTLE.

O Jesus! ever present,
 O Shepherd! ever kind,
 Thy name is sweetest music
 To ear, and heart, and mind.

It woke our tender childhood
To muse on things above ;
It draws our harder manhood
With cords of mighty love.

No name like this revealeth
What God to man would give ;
No name so sweetly teacheth
How must His people live.
So gently, yet securely,
Our Shepherd's hand doth lead ;
So simply, yet so purely,
His sheep together feed.

How oft to sure destruction
Our feet had gone astray,
Wert Thou not, patient Shepherd,
The Guardian of our way !
How oft, in darkness fallen,
And wounded sore by sin,
Thy gentle hand upraised us,
And healing balm poured in.

O hard is passing sorrow !
But when we heavenward look,
What seemed the rod of anger
Is but the Shepherd's crook.
So lovingly Thou leadest
From pasture-fields of death,
Where snare and fall lie hidden
The verdant path beneath.

O Shepherd good ! we follow,
And trust in Thee for all,
To guide us, and to feed us,
And raise us when we fall.
Thy voice, in life so mighty,
In death shall make us bold ;
O bring us all together
In one eternal fold !



Third Sunday after Easter.

THE COLLECT.

ALMIGHTY GOD, who shewest to them that be in error the light of Thy truth, to the intent that they may return into the way of righteousness; Grant unto all them that are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's Religion, that they may eschew those things that are contrary to their profession, and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same; through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

THE EPISTLE	... ..	I <i>Peter</i> ii. 11.
THE GOSPEL	... ..	<i>John</i> xvi. 16.
FIRST LESSONS	{ Morning	... <i>Deut.</i> iv.
	{ Evening	... <i>Deut.</i> v.

A GLANCE at the special services for to-day will show us what is the general lesson we are called to gather from them. We are not to receive "the inestimable benefit" of Christ's death and resurrection for ourselves alone. Self-sacrificing, active charity, is the very character of life in a risen Saviour. If we have, in the words of last Sunday's Epistle,

“returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls,”—if we are known of Him, and hear His voice and follow Him,—we must not forget those “other sheep,” for whom He has given His life, still wandering in darkness and danger. We must prove our love to Him by helping to restore them. In proportion as we value the treasure of Divine peace which He has revealed to us, we shall desire to make it known to others.

I. In the Collect we say that “God sheweth to them that be in error the light of His truth, to the intent that they may return into the way of righteousness.” By “them that be in error,” is meant not only those who *think* and *judge* erroneously concerning religion, but those who live out of the way of truth and salvation,—those whose minds, hearts, words and works, are contrary to the will of God. Alas! how many such are around us, close to our own doors! And *why* are they in darkness and the shadow of death? Is it because our Heavenly Father has withdrawn His loving-kindness from them and will not receive them? No! He shows them “the light of His truth, that they may return into the way of righteousness.” That light, as far as *His* will is concerned, is *never* withdrawn from them. But they do not *perceive* it: their souls are

dazzled by the glare of the fires of this world. It is *our* work—the work of every Christian man—to commend the light of truth to their hearts. And how? Simply by “eschewing all those things which are contrary to our profession, and following all things which are agreeable to the same.” The living argument of a consistent Christian life never fails. If they perceive that the tendency of our everyday life is to the honour of our common humanity, as well as to the love of the brotherhood; to the honour of the Sovereign, and all in authority under her, as well as to the fear of God: if they see shining from us wherever we go “love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance,” they will be compelled to confess, “Happy are the people that are in such a case;” and they will be drawn to seek the service of this high and blessed life.

II. The Epistle for to-day, taken from the same chapter as that for last Sunday, *comes before it* in the chapter, and yet it seems most naturally and appropriately to *follow* it. There St. Peter teaches that we were called, we were made Christians, that we might imitate the virtues of our Divine Master, and endeavour to follow His steps. Here he teaches what will be the blessed effects of our doing so.

We shall not only save our own souls, we shall also, it may be, become the means of winning others to the way of salvation. We have as mighty an opposition of the world to contend against as ever *they* had to whom St. Peter wrote. *We*, too, must have "our conversation honest," must live purely and uprightly amongst worldly men, "that they may, by our good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." We, too, must, not by clamorous disputation, but by "*well doing*, put to silence the ignorance of foolish men."

III. Here let us turn to the First Lessons, which may very suitably be studied by the light of the Epistle. Forasmuch as they follow each other, and may be looked upon as parts of the same great address of Moses, they may be considered together. How earnestly does Moses remind the people of Israel, in these chapters and elsewhere, of God's great purpose in choosing them out from the nations, revealing to them His will, giving them His law, and doing so many wonderful works in their behalf! It was not "for their righteousness," but because He "loved their fathers." He had a great work for them to do in the world. He would have them bear witness of His truth and righteousness before the

idolatrous and sinful nations. He would have them reflect "the light of His truth," which He had mercifully shown unto them, upon the dark surrounding world. Observe how beautifully this His great purpose concerning them comes out in the fifth and sixth verses of the Morning's Lesson.

It was because they forgot this their real mission in the world, because they kept their blessings to themselves, because they rested upon mere outward privileges, because, instead of magnifying the name of the Lord their God, they rather caused His name to be blasphemed among the Gentiles through them, that God removed from them their boasted privileges and scattered them among the nations.

IV. We have only now to see how far the Gospel teaching connects itself with what has been already considered. Our Lord's simple object throughout this touching conversation with His apostles seems to have been this, to make them feel that all He was about to do was for their sakes. His temporary absence from them was but to bring about His abiding presence to the end of the world. The sorrow He would cause them was to produce a deeper and lasting joy. He mentions not His own sorrow: He thinks but of *them*. He says

nothing of His own glory to spring out of His sad humiliation: for all He did was for His people. His heart was full of them. Oh, may we have grace to follow this our great Example! May we learn to think last of our own comfort and glory, and to think first of others,—how we may show to *them* the light of God's truth, and make *them* share the joy which no man taketh from *us*.

O merciful Shepherd of our souls, make us anything, and lead us anywhere, if we can but bring some poor wandering souls to hear Thy voice, to follow Thy leading, and taste the blessedness of Thy love.



THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

“Your joy no man taketh from you.”—COLLECT,
EPISTLE, FIRST LESSON, GOSPEL.

O joy untold! for all who know
Their hidden life, and turn to Him
When earthly lights are waxing dim,
And, one by one, their treasures go:
O joy to know! the hand of Death,
Come when and how the tyrant may,
Can touch not us, but takes away
The body's fashion, and its breath.

O joy more sweet than all, to feel
That some few rays of heavenly light,
Which makes *our* life for ever bright,
We may to darker lives reveal.
O joy to win a sinner's heart
By silent force of truth and right,
To seek the long forsaken light,
And choose with Christ the better part.



Fourth Sunday after Easter.

THE COLLECT.

O ALMIGHTY GOD, who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men ; Grant unto Thy people, that they may love the thing which Thou commandest, and desire that which Thou dost promise ; that so, among the sundry and manifold changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed, where true joys are to be found ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE EPISTLE	... ..	...	...	...	<i>James</i> i. 17.
THE GOSPEL	... ..	...	...	...	<i>John</i> xvi. 5.
FIRST LESSONS	{	Morning	...	...	<i>Deut.</i> vi.
		Evening	...	...	<i>Deut.</i> vii.

THE services for to-day do but carry on, and press to a farther application, the teaching of the last two Sundays.

I. Let us trace this in the Collect. Why is it that we do not thankfully—or not *half thankfully enough*—receive the inestimable benefit of the sacrifice of Christ? Why do we not continue to follow the blessed steps of

His most holy life? Why do we so little, by our good works in the world, to commend to them that be in error the light of God's truth? It is because we do not truly love what God commands, nor desire what He has promised. Too often, indeed, we obey His commandments in the outward act, because we fear the consequences of disobedience; and we desire His promises of future bliss when the world can promise us no more. Our wills and affections are so unruly, and we do not yield them to the ordering of God's kingdom. We suffer ourselves to be distracted by the sundry and manifold changes of the world. We are not perfectly assured that there is but one Fountain of true joys, and keep our hearts fixed there.

II. We trace the same teaching in the Epistle. St. James's words may be freely paraphrased thus: "However the world around us may change, and our unruly hearts be moved by these changes, our Heavenly Father remains the same. His righteousness and goodness never change. Whatever is good for man, and whatever ministers to his true joy, comes from Him, and will be freely given to all whose hearts are wholly turned to Him to seek them. He has—not on account of anything good in our—

selves, but of His own free grace—called us to a new life in His Son by the word of truth. His one object in dealing thus graciously with us is that we may be ‘a kind of first-fruits of His creatures’—that we, by following the example of Christ, may show forth to the world how man was created to live, and wherein consists his real joy. Wherefore, let every man keep his heart open to hear this guiding voice, and not be too ready to utter his own vain judgments concerning the things which happen to him or to his brethren. Still less let him give way to the unruly passions of his mind; for certainly not *thus* will he accomplish his Heavenly Father’s will, and set forward His work. Therefore, as, before the graft can be expected to impart its better life to the old stock, the parasites that cling about it must be removed, and the suckers that draw off its nourishment must be cut down, so, if we would have our souls saved by the engrafted word of Divine truth, we must receive it in pureness and meekness, cleansed from all sinful passions, and set free from the distraction of worldly cares.”

III. The Lessons, as those of last Sunday, may well be considered after the Epistle; for the words of Moses will be found to contain in substance the same teaching. We may

take that portion of St. James's Epistle clause by clause, and find verses in these Lessons to answer each.

1. Observe how Moses sets before the people of Israel the unchangeableness of God in His character and works. "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children,"* &c. Again, "Know therefore that the Lord thy God, He is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments to a thousand generations."†

2. Observe, in the 7th chapter, ‡ how He reminds them that it was "of God's own will" to make them a special people, a "kind of first-fruits of His creatures," and not on account of anything good in themselves, that He had "set His love upon them" and chosen them.

3. Observe how he exhorts them to be "swift to hear" the law of God, § and "slow to speak" the questions of their own proud hearts. ||

* Deut. vi. 4—7. † Deut. vii. 9. ‡ Deut. vii. 6—8.

§ Deut. vi. 6—10.

|| Deut. vi. 16.

4. Then observe how he warns them again and again, in the Evening Lesson, to put away from them all the impurities and idolatrous tendencies of the Canaanites, all "filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness," in order that they might "hearken unto God's judgments, and keep and do them," and so preserve His blessing.

May it not be said, that the main object of the whole address of Moses in these chapters is to impress upon God's people that if they would retain the "inestimable benefit" of His covenant, and shed forth "the light of His truth" upon the nations, they must love that which He commands, and desire that which He promises, and fix their hearts on Him?

IV. It remains only to see how the Gospel harmonizes with the other services. Why was it that sorrow filled the hearts of the disciples when Jesus spoke of leaving them? Because they had not understood what He had told them before, "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in me."

Their hearts were not fixed above the changes of the world and the things of sight. They could not realize the Invisible Presence of their Divine Master by the Spirit. They thought only of their own comfort in His

presence. They did not see that His bodily departure was expedient, not only for them, but that the Omnipresent Comforter might come to "convince *the world* of sin, and righteousness, and judgment." They did not think how many things Jesus had to say which at that time they could not hear; how they needed to be guided into all truth concerning Him and themselves, by the Spirit of Truth.

How comforting it is to close our reflections with the words of the Gospel before us! "When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth." This promise has been fulfilled. He *has* come. He *is* present, we humbly believe, with each one of us. If only we faithfully call upon Him, and receive Him in purity and meekness, He will order our "unruly wills and affections;" He will make us love all that our Heavenly Father commands, and desire all that He promises. And then, only then, will our hearts be "surely fixed" where true joys are to be found.



FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

COLLECT, EPISTLE, GOSPEL, FIRST LESSON.

Thou, O Lord, in love unailing,
 Rulest all the souls of Thine ;
Truth and justice, all prevailing,
 In Thy kingdom brightly shine.
We, alas ! for ever changing,
 Lose in sin their guiding light ;
Worldly cares, from Thee estranging,
 Hold our hearts in shades of night.

Great Redeemer ! ever living
 Where no earthly change can be,
We, our life from Thee deriving,
 Seek our joy alone in Thee !
Let not worldly lights deceive us ;
 By Thy Spirit draw us all
To the friends who cannot leave us,
 To the home that cannot fall !



Fifth Sunday after Easter

THE COLLECT.

O LORD, from whom all good things do come ; Grant to us Thy humble servants, that by Thy holy inspiration we may think those things that be good, and by Thy merciful guiding may perform the same ; through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

THE EPISTLE	... ..	... ..	James i. 22.
THE GOSPEL	... ..	... ..	John xvi. 23.
FIRST LESSONS	{	Morning	... Deut. viii.
		Evening	... Deut. ix.

THERE is one *warning* running through all the services for to-day, following upon what was taught us last Sunday. We may love to *contemplate* what God commands, and yet not *perform* it. We may *desire* His promises, and yet not earnestly strive, in His way, and by His means, to make them ours. We may "receive with meekness the engrafted word," but *only into our minds*, without yielding our whole selves to be ruled by it. We may pray

for the Spirit of Truth, and yet not perform the good which He inspires us to think.

I. We see, then, how wisely the prayer of the Collect is put into our mouths on this the last Sunday after Easter, before we pass on to the festivals of the Ascension, Pentecost, and Trinity Sunday. Vain, and worse than vain, will be all the sublime teachings of these festivals, if we will not apply them to our own lives, and if they have not the effect of making us strive to live more like Christ in the world. It is also not a little significant that the Collect for to-day is in substance the same as that for Easter Day, when we prayed that "as, by God's special grace preventing us, He puts into our minds good desires, so, by His continual help, we may bring the same to good effect."

II. The Epistle immediately follows last Sunday's; we may, therefore, continue the paraphrase which we then began.

"Beware of receiving the engrafted word of Divine truth only into your ears; to be approved by your understandings, and yet lay no hold of your lives. For that word is the faithful mirror of your true selves: it will show you what you are, and at the same time tell you what you ought to be. If, therefore, you will not listen to its warnings, and follow its pre-

cepts, you must be self-deceivers. But if your hearts have been made free by the Spirit of Truth,—if He has guided you into the glorious liberty of the children of God,—if you have the courage at all times to *look into* the whole law of your Divine Master, knowing that whatever it enjoins is for your true good;—then, keeping in mind all you hear, because you delight in it, and hastening to perform it, you will make the performance of it a blessing to the soul. On the other hand, if any man pretends to be religious, and yet will not even set himself to the simple duty of trying to ‘rule his tongue,’—guiding his words with discretion,—but deceives himself into the belief that this is not enjoined, *that* man’s religion is nothing worth. The only religion profitable to man, and acceptable with God, is that which enables a man to feel for others and seek to do them good, to govern himself by the help of the Spirit, and to overcome the world by the power of faith.”

III. It need hardly be pointed out how this warning against hearing and thinking that which is good, but not performing it, is repeated from beginning to end in the First Lessons.

In the Evening Lesson, Moses reminds the people how on one occasion they had pro-

voked God even to think of destroying them. And why? Because they had "quickly turned aside out of the way which He commanded them." He tells them that they had been rebellious against the Lord from the day that He knew them. And theirs was rebellion of the worst kind, rebellion against unwearied love, rebellion in the very midst of the richest mercies. God had been all these forty years leading them in the wilderness "to humble and to prove them, to know what was in their hearts, whether they would keep His commandments or no." And the sad result of that long and merciful probation was, "they believed not, neither hearkened to His voice." Therefore, but for the intercession of Moses (a true type of the merciful Intercessor to whom we look), God would have destroyed them; because they gave proof enough that they had not the spirit of faithful Abraham their father.

IV. And may we not trace the same warning in the Gospel? The disciples, in consequence of what Jesus had just said, declare, "Now are we sure that Thou camest forth from God." Their minds received the word of truth, and they fancied they had suddenly risen up to a full and perfect faith. "Jesus answered them, *Do ye now believe?* Behold, the

hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone." As if He had said, "Do ye suppose that, because ye are suddenly inspired with this good thought, because your minds at this moment see so clearly the truth of My Divine character, you have therefore a true, lasting faith in Me? Alas! *you* will soon be put to the trial and be found wanting; *you* will soon fail to perform the good thoughts with which you are now inspired; *you* will soon act like 'forgetful hearers' of My word; *you* will leave, for a time at least, Him whom now you say you believe to have come forth from God."

Sadly, we know, this His prophecy was fulfilled.

And how often is it so with ourselves! How many glowing thoughts in the mind and how few and cold the performances in the life! How like we are, in the life of our Christian pilgrimage, to Israel of old in the probation of the wilderness! Faithless and rebellious, we deserve but destruction; but the very opening words of the Gospel give us hope and consolation. "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you." And what better gift can we

ask than we have asked in the Collect for to-day?

O blessed thought! One higher far than Moses, Jesus our great High Priest, is pleading for us on the mount with the Father. The prayer is still going up, and we know that it is heard; "O Lord God, destroy not Thine inheritance which Thou hast redeemed through Thy greatness!"



FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

COLLECT, EPISTLE, GOSPEL.

Thou grantest, Lord, from day to day,
The best Thy faithful people pray,
The most our sinful hearts can bear:
But oh! what germs of holy thought,
Of Thine inspiring, come to nought;
How oft our life disowns our prayer!

O Fount of Good, our minds inspire,
Warm our dull hearts with holy fire,
Our way direct, our footsteps guide:
Help us, with trustful heart and free,
Through light and dark to follow Thee,
And love Thee more, whate'er betide.

May we Thy word more wisely heed,
And own, as oft we hear and read,

A Father guides His children dear.
May we our true religion show
In holy works the world can know,
With heavenward aim and conscience clear.



ROGATION SUNDAY.

“ Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.”

O Father, ever kind !
This, first of all, we pray,
That from each weak and earthly mind
All clouds may pass away ;
That we may know aright
Our life and all around,
And only judge by Heavenly Light
Where solid joys are found.

Leave us, our God, no more
To nature's wilful choice ;
In every path go Thou before,
Let us but hear Thy voice ;
And if, in Love's employ
Come grief, and many a fall,
'Tis joy enough to know that joy
Is working out of all.



Sunday after Ascension Day.

THE COLLECT.

O God the King of glory, who hast exalted Thine only Son Jesus Christ with great triumph unto Thy kingdom in heaven ; We beseech Thee, leave us not comfortless ; but send to us Thine Holy Ghost to comfort us, and exalt us unto the same place whither our Saviour Christ is gone before, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

THE EPISTLE... .. I *Peter* iv. 7.

THE GOSPEL *John* xv. 26, and part of xvi.

FIRST LESSONS { Morning ... *Deut.* xii.
 Evening ... *Deut.* xiii.

WE are continually reminded to-day of the concluding words of the Epistle for last Thursday. Many of *us* are no doubt tempted to "stand gazing up into Heaven." Our hearts and minds have gone up with our glorified Redeemer ; and fain would we forget, in His blissful presence, the cares and sorrows of this lower world. But we must

call to remembrance what the angels said to the apostles: "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come even as ye have seen Him go into Heaven." He has but disappeared for a season, in order that through the Spirit, whom He has sent, His Father's kingdom may be extended over the whole world. He has gone to prepare a place for His people; but this can only be by sending the Holy Spirit to prepare them for the place. We are not to look up to Heaven for Him; we are to realize His presence in the work He has appointed us to do on earth.

I. The Collect, compared with that for the Ascension Day, suggests many deep and wholesome thoughts for us all. We prayed that we might in heart and mind ascend to Heaven with our Redeemer, "and with Him continually dwell." Alas! we are soon made to feel how hardly we can do this. The burden of our sins and our cares soon presses us to earth again. There seems a widening gulf between us and Him whom we long for. We must, therefore, most earnestly pray that we may not be left comfortless, but that our Heavenly Father will "send His Holy Spirit to comfort us;" that is, teach us all

we need to know, and enable us to perform the same.

II. In the Gospel the Lord forewarns His apostles wherein they would especially require the presence and power of the Comforter.

First, in the *work* appointed for them to do. They were ordained to bear witness in their lives, in their works, and in their preaching, of the truth of His doctrine, and of the reality of His kingdom. How could they do this in their ignorance and weakness, unless the Spirit of Truth were with them, "to testify of Him"?

Secondly, in the *sufferings* they would be called to endure in fulfilling that work. They *must* needs suffer persecution, as long as those to whom they preached knew not the Father nor Him; for their preaching, so opposed to all the world's notions of God and of righteousness, would seem but blasphemy; and, therefore, to kill these blasphemers would be in their eyes to do God service. The temptation of Christ's disciples, when the times of persecution and suffering came, would be to grow offended,—to ask, "Why, if our Heavenly King be with us, does He not interfere to save us?" Their consolation could only spring from a true

compassion for the ignorance of their persecutors, from a remembrance that their Master had Himself foretold what must come, and in the assurance that suffering itself was part of their appointed work, which was in all things to testify of Him. Only the power of the ever-present Spirit of Truth could give them this consolation.

III. Let the Epistle teach us how to apply the truth of the Ascension to our own lives. As men who believe that our Lord Jesus Christ, though in His human nature ascended to Heaven, is ever present with us by His Spirit, guiding and teaching, helping and comforting us, let us show ourselves examples of sobriety in thought and opinion, in feeling and desire, in word and deed. As men who know that in a little while He who is hidden from our sight in Heaven will reveal Himself even as He went, let us be ever watchful, and show our watchfulness by continual prayer. Let the world see how this faith in our Master's presence can make us love one another, and how the power of our love, through the Spirit of Love, can heal the effects, and stay the ravages of sin. Let us receive one another, and deal with one another, as members of one body in Christ our exalted Head. Whatever our position and work in the Church,

whatever our endowments of mind and opportunities of usefulness, let us regard ourselves as stewards of the grace of God, each one put in trust for something for the glory of our Heavenly Father and the good of our brethren.

IV. Looking to the First Lessons, we must bear in mind at what time, and with what evident special design, Moses delivered this charge to the people of God. They were about to enter the land of promise under another leader ; but the spirit of the words of Moses, as they were inspired by God, was to guide and keep them there. Thus his position typified that of Christ, when He delivered that address to the apostles from which the Gospel for to-day is taken.

Again, there were some of the people, perhaps, tempted to suppose that as soon as they entered Canaan they would begin a life of perfect liberty, independence and enjoyment. Moses, therefore, in the 9th and 10th verses of this Morning's Lesson, tells them that the rest and inheritance which the Lord was giving them, would but require of them a stricter obedience to His law. The greater their privileges the greater their responsibilities. Moreover, again in the 29th verse, he forewarns them that even when their enemies were

vanquished, and their land possessed, they would still be dangerous in other ways, and require to be watched against. Their evil example would be a continual snare to unfaithful souls. Furthermore, even from among themselves there might arise prophets and dreamers of dreams, to turn them away from hearkening to the voice of the Lord their God.

Can we not easily apply all this to ourselves by the help of the Epistle and Gospel for the day? We are not as yet come to the heavenly rest and inheritance which the Lord our God has given us through the ascension of our Head; therefore we must pray that His Spirit may be with us, to guide, to sanctify, and to help us. Our spiritual enemies are vanquished; they shall no more have dominion over us; but they are full of subtlety and mischief. They must be watched against, and fought against. There are "dreamers of dreams," speaking in the name of Christ, and claiming to be inspired by His Spirit, who may turn away our hearts from following after the Lord: therefore must we continually pray that the Spirit of Truth will be with us to testify of Christ, and to guide us into all truth.



SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION.

COLLECT, EPISTLE, GOSPEL, FIRST LESSON.

Our life is hid, our Head is gone ;
We seem like orphans left alone,
Who know not whence can comfort come.
Upward we strain our eager sight,
To pierce, perchance, the realms of light,
Where He prepares our promised home.

It may not be ; dark shadows fall ;
Still comes the angel's chiding call,
"Why stand ye, idly gazing there?"
That Heaven is ours, but unpossesst ;
True work must win its blissful rest,
A life of faith its way prepare.

O Lord, Thy people watch and pray
For that unknown, that awful day,
When Thou shalt once again appear.
Be all our hearts to love attuned,
Our lives of worldly longings pruned,
Like men who know their King is near.



Whit-Sunday.

THE COLLECT.

GOD, who as at this time didst teach the hearts of Thy faithful people, by the sending to them the light of Thy Holy Spirit; Grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in His holy comfort; through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour, who liveth and reigneth with Thee, in the unity of the same Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

THE EPISTLE *Acts ii. 1.*

THE GOSPEL *John xiv. 15.*

THE LESSONS	{	FIRST	{	Morning ...	<i>Deut. xvi. 1—18.</i>
			{	Evening ...	<i>Isaiah xi.</i>
	{	SECOND	{	Morning ...	<i>Acts x. 1—34.</i>
			{	Evening ...	<i>Acts xix. 1—21.</i>

MUCH might be said concerning the name of this great festival, and the customs connected with its observance in the ancient Church. But we must keep before us the distinct object of these papers, which is, to draw out the harmonized teaching of the appointed services. These we shall find so ad-

mirably ordered, that we are left in ignorance of nothing which can make us honour the day, gratefully commemorate it, and earnestly seek to realize its blessing in our own souls.

I. The First Morning Lesson sets before us the institution of the old Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost, the type of ours. Hence we may at once learn the reason why we should keep it, and the spirit in which it ought to be kept. In order to understand clearly what the Jewish Pentecost was, we should compare with the Lesson the following passages;—Exod. xxiv. 22 ; Levit. xxiii. 15, 16 ; Numb. xxviii. 26.

It was to be kept on the fiftieth day from “the morrow after the Sabbath” following the Passover. It was a festival of thanksgiving for the Harvest ; and on this account two loaves made of new meal, and the tenth part of an ephah of grain, were offered as the first-fruits. Moreover, this was the commemoration of the giving of the Law from Mount Sinai, which happened on the fiftieth day after their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt. Therefore on this day there was an offering for sin, besides many whole burnt sacrifices. Let us note well one thing in God’s commandment respecting the celebration of this festival. “Thou shalt rejoice before the Lord

thy God, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite that is within thy gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are among you, in the place which the Lord thy God hath chosen to place His name there" (verse 11).

It was not only to be a time of solemn rejoicing, but of *rejoicing together*. Thus they were to foreshadow that blessed state of oneness of heart and soul described at the end of the 2nd and 4th chapters of the Acts of the Apostles. And very significant is the reason given why these statutes of the Feast should be observed. "Thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt." The recollection of their utter helplessness, and their entire dependence upon the grace of Jehovah, was to cast down all selfish pride, and draw "each to his brethren, all to God."

II. The Epistle records the fulfilment of this. The first-fruits of the Harvest, according to the Law, were being offered in the place which God had chosen to put His name there. At this very time God had gathered together the first-fruits of that glorious Harvest of faithful souls which Jesus had sown, and now marvellously ripened with the Light of His Spirit. While they who thought them-

selves His people were commemorating the giving of the Law from Sinai, which they imagined to be the greatest revelation of the Divine will, He Himself came down and wrote that Law in the hearts of His faithful people by His own Spirit of Truth and Love. Then was soon beheld that oneness of heart and life which the common rejoicing at this season had faintly foreshadowed. "All that believed were together, and had all things common." "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul."

III. And yet the great event described in the Epistle would not be of so much interest and consolation to *us* but for what we read in the Second Lessons. They record the coming of the Holy Spirit *to the Gentiles*, declaring the glorious truth, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling." They tell us, moreover—nor let us fail to note this well—what manner of persons God chooses to make partakers of His Spirit—and they intimate the outward means men must have recourse to, and faithfully use, if they hope to receive Him.

IV. The Proper Psalms are full of prophecies of Pentecost and its blessings.

I. The 48th is a song of triumph over

the Lord's wonderful deliverance of His Holy Place and people. When the little band of true Israelites were gathered together in the upper room of the Temple, and suddenly the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spake with tongues, how might they have taken to themselves the words, "We wait for Thy loving-kindness, O God, in the midst of Thy Temple. O God, according to Thy Name, so is Thy praise unto the world's end: Thy right hand is full of righteousness."

2. The 68th is a joyful song on the bringing of the ark of God to Mount Zion, foreshadowing the exaltation of Jesus with great triumph into Heaven, and all the blessed consequences of that His victory to His elect people. On this day we understand at once the meaning of those grand words, "Thou art gone up on high, Thou hast led captivity captive, and received gifts for men, yea, even for Thine enemies, that the Lord God might dwell among them."

And yet no gifts which the mightiest conqueror in his most splendid triumph could scatter amongst the multitudes of beholders—not the costliest sacrifices and peace offerings offered before the ark, as it returned in triumph to the Holy Place—not the richest feasts spread forth before rejoicing multitudes on

such an occasion—could be more than the faintest type of those unspeakable gifts of the Spirit which our ascended Lord has poured out upon His Church.

3. The 104th describes so beautifully the dependence of the whole universe upon the Spirit of the living God, that it is most suitable for the utterance of our praise on such a day as this. We know the full meaning of such words as these, "When Thou lettest Thy breath go forth they shall be made; and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth."

4. The 145th breathes the same tone as those which go before. *Now* indeed, since the event of this day, we are assured that, "The Lord is gracious, and merciful; long-suffering, and of great goodness. The Lord is loving unto every man, and His mercy is over all His works. . . . Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Thy dominion endureth throughout all ages."

V. The First Evening Lesson is the most beautiful prophecy in the Old Testament of the coming of the Divine Spirit upon Jesus the Son of David; of the manner in which It should manifest Its power *in* Him and *through* Him to His Church; and of the gradual progress and triumphs of His kingdom in the whole

world. Let us not overlook the emphatic word "rest" in the second verse. "The Spirit of the Lord shall *rest* upon"—shall abide with—"Him." There had been *spiritual men* before, but not *a spiritual human race*. God had given His Spirit to many of His servants to qualify them for special works; but the Spirit had never dwelt in them. From the day of Pentecost the Divine Spirit took up His everlasting abode in the human race revived in Christ its Head. Individual members of the body may grieve Him, quench His light, and fall away in death; but He will never leave the whole body.

VI. Here we may at once trace a connecting link with the Gospel. Jesus promises His disciples, "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever." He, as *the Man Christ Jesus*, must for a while be absent from their sight; but He, as *the Son of God*, would be ever present in them by His Spirit. "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you."

But to whom alone does He promise that He will come? Who alone can take to themselves the full blessings of this festival, and evermore rejoice in the Spirit's holy comfort? "If a man love Me, he will keep My words, and My

Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." His Spirit will only dwell with us as long as we love Him; and He Himself has told us the one only means of proving our love: "If ye love Me, keep My commandments."

Wherefore, what need continually have we to pray that God will send to us, as to the faithful people of old, "the light of His Holy Spirit, that we may have a right judgment *in all things*"?

"O God, make clean our hearts within us, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from us." Amen.



WHIT-SUNDAY.

THE GOSPEL, THE EPISTLE.

As o'er her grateful brood the gentle dove
 So softly hovers, breathing peace and love—
 For *there* is nothing she would have away,
 And all their joy in her accomplish they;
 So from the gate of Heaven, His glorious throne,
 Descends the Spirit on the Incarnate Son;
 By Him to work the Father's perfect will;
 In Him the type of manhood to fulfil.

As o'er reviving woods the rushing wind,
Kind angel ever of the loving mind,
So oft may seem with living things at strife,
While only rending death, and rousing life ;
So o'er the Church, His living dwelling-place,
Descends the Spirit, shedding life and grace ;
Strong as the blast to scatter pride and sin,
Soft as the spring to nourish faith within.

So be with us, sweet Comforter Divine ;
So work in us, to make us wholly Thine :
Feed our weak faith, our selfish hearts subdue ;
Guide us in truth, and govern all we do.
Come like the gentle dove when we are strong ;
Come like the rushing wind when we are wrong :
Raise us, arouse us, bind us, make us free ;
Save from ourselves, and keep us safe in Thee !



Trinity-Sunday.

THE COLLECT.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who hast given unto us Thy servants grace by the confession of a true faith to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of the Divine Majesty to worship the Unity; We beseech Thee, that Thou wouldest keep us stedfast in this faith, and evermore defend us from all adversities, who livest and reignest, one God, world without end. Amen.

THE EPISTLE *Rev. iv. i.*

THE GOSPEL *John iii. i.*

THE LESSONS	FIRST	Morning	... <i>Genesis i.</i>
		Evening	... <i>Genesis xviii.</i>
	SECOND	Morning	... <i>Matthew iii.</i>
		Evening	... <i>I John v.</i>

IT will be observed how the Holy Trinity is everywhere set before us to-day, not as a dogma to be proved, but as a mystery to be adored and applied to our own lives. The portions of Holy Scripture selected for the Lessons, the Epistle, and the Gospel, describe

in so many different ways the same mysterious revelation of the Triune God to His creatures.

In the First Morning Lesson we behold the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, working together in the creation of the world and the first Adam. In the Second Lesson we behold the Father and the Spirit in the baptism of the Incarnate Son, the Second Adam.

The First Evening Lesson describes God's wonderful revelation of Himself, as "three men," to Abraham, the Father of the Faithful. The Second Lesson binds upon us the necessity of believing in the doctrine that "there are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost," inasmuch as we have the "witness in Himself" that it is true; for it was the voice of God Himself which twice declared, "This is My beloved 'son"; and the Son declared of the Spirit, that He "proceedeth from the Father."

In the Gospel the same doctrine of God is discernible, though not directly. But the Lord's words to Nicodemus will be found to prove in a very striking manner the essential oneness of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. For He speaks of the necessity of admission into the kingdom of God, a new birth of the Spirit, and eternal life in the Son.

In that sublime passage of the Apocalypse appointed for the Epistle our minds are called up within the veil, to hear the Heavenly host crying "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come."

Comparing the First Evening Lesson with the Gospel, we derive a warning against scepticism concerning the doctrine of this festival. "How can these things be?" asks Nicodemus, with an earnest desire, we may believe, to have them explained to his intelligence. But "Sarah laughed within herself" at the mysterious promise which seemed so contrary to nature. God's reproofing answer to her is also an answer to Nicodemus: "Is anything too hard for God?"

It is the part of true faith to bow to the simple word of God, however far above the comprehension of natural intelligence, and even though seemingly against the laws of nature. I say *seemingly*; for how little we really know of what we call "the laws of nature"!

Several single statements in the appointed services for the day will be found to bind upon us the necessity of believing in the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity. Take only the words of the Creator in this Morning's First Lesson: "Let *Us* make Man in Our image."

To that Divine image, from which we are naturally fallen, we must be restored, or remain outcasts from the kingdom of Heaven. But how can this restoration be accomplished without the revelation of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost? For, in order to be restored to God's image, we must know Him; in order to know Him we must draw near to Him. But we cannot know Him, nor draw near to Him, until we love Him; and we cannot love Him unless we know Him as "the Father"; and we can only know the Father by the only begotten Son declaring Him. Again, we cannot, in our sinfulness, draw near to the Holy God without a Mediator between us and Him; which Mediator must be both God and man. But we cannot *have* that Mediator,—we cannot be "*in Him*,"—except we are first "born of the Spirit." But now, "through Him [*i.e.*, the only begotten Son] we have access by one Spirit unto the Father." We are restored to God's image by His dwelling in us by His Spirit, through His Son. "We know that we are of God." By "the fellowship of the Holy Ghost" we are made partakers of "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ;" and through "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" we are made partakers of "the love of God."

Surely the Collect for this day speaks home its own lesson.

We say that God has "*given us grace*" to believe this great fundamental doctrine of the Gospel. Let us then devoutly thank Him, and show our thankfulness by striving to live upon what He has taught us. Let us have a true compassion for those who remain ignorant of His full truth. Let us remember that, as of ourselves we could not have found it, so neither by ourselves can we preserve it. We must pray earnestly that He will "keep us stedfast in this faith, and evermore defend us from all adversities" (*i.e.*, all things around us, and in us, which tend to rob us of this faith by which we live).



TRINITY-SUNDAY.

"Our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ."

Now no more our heavenly home
Through the clouds we faintly trace ;
God for us has man become,
Man in Heaven has found a place ;
And the Spirit of the Father
Dwells in our redeemèd race.

Now no more shall slavish dread
Man to hard obedience move ;
In the Son, our living Head,
Sweetly drawn to things above,
By the Spirit seek we access
To a Heavenly Father's love.

Now no more in helpless pain
Wounded hearts are left to bleed ;
Earthly loss is heavenly gain,
By a Father's word decreed :
He whose Spirit dwells within us
Feels our nature's utmost need.

Therefore now your voices raise
To the blessed Three in One,
Telling forth in loudest praise
All His wondrous love has done ;
Crying, " Holy, holy, holy,"
With the saints before His throne.



First Sunday after Trinity.

THE COLLECT.

O GOD, the strength of all them that put their trust in Thee, mercifully accept our prayers ; and because through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do no good thing without Thee, grant us the help of Thy grace, that in keeping of Thy commandments we may please Thee, both in will and deed ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE EPISTLE I *John* iv. 7.

THE GOSPEL *Luke* xvi. 19.

FIRST LESSONS { Morning ... *Joshua* x.
 Evening ... *Joshua* xxiii.

ON these Sundays after Trinity there will generally be found one text which expresses the whole teaching of the day. Such a text is to be found in the Epistle: "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love ; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." Every great festival of the Christian year as it comes round does but continue the same touching

story of our Heavenly Father's love in His Son. And, now it remains for us to prove that "we love Him because He first loved us." What more could He do for us than He has already done? And He requires no more of us than this,—to seek "the help of His grace, that in keeping of His commandments we may please Him both in will and deed."

I. The First Lessons are evidently chosen to represent unto us what God's love has done for us, and requires of us. We have been brought, as it were, to the borders of Canaan, and now the Heavenly Voice bids us, under the guidance of the true Joshua, go in and take possession. How much spiritual instruction is contained in that one verse: "All these kings and their land did Joshua take at one time, because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel." Weak indeed, nay, utterly helpless, must they have been, if left to themselves to fight against these Canaanites; but with God, their invisible guide and protector, they were irresistible. So, referring to the Collect, whereas, through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do no good thing without God, we *can*, through the help of His grace, please Him in will and in deed. We "*can* do all things through Christ that strengtheneth" us. We *must* "work out"

our "own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure."

The Evening Lesson presses home the same reflections. Joshua, with his own end in view, reminds the people of Israel of the mighty works the Lord had already done, and was ready still to do, for them. "Not one thing hath failed," he reminds them, "of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you." And what of necessity follows? Why, that all the evil things threatened against disobedience will surely come upon them when they have "transgressed the covenant" of the Lord their God.

Let us judge ourselves by this chapter. Let us call to remembrance what God has done for us. Let us meditate deeply upon the words of the Epistle, that we may learn the breadth, and depth, and height of His love to us. As men who believe that "the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world,"—who know that "we dwell in Him and He in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us,"—how should we live towards God and towards our brethren? How can we live for ourselves, if we realize the indwelling of the Divine love, and if we know that to

commend that love to us, Christ laid down His life for us?

Very awful is the warning of the Gospel. Behold the end of one who proved that he had no love for God, by want of active charity to his brother! It was not only that Lazarus was at his gate in pain and want. There was a prior, and far more pressing claim upon his love unsatisfied. His five brethren were in his father's house unwarned; the means of grace were within their reach, but despised; Moses and the Prophets, the books of the Old Testament, were ever warning against a selfish sinful life, and ever calling to repent and turn to God, but in vain; the covenant of the Lord was continually despised and broken;—but he had not love enough to warn them, or to fight against the selfishness that was destroying himself and them.

What can save *us* from such an end as his? One thing only. We must first give ourselves to God in a life of hearty devotion, and then give ourselves to our brethren in works of active charity.



FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

FIRST LESSONS, GOSPEL, EPISTLE, COLLECT.

What more of God can mortal know ?
What more can love itself bestow
 To bless the human race ?
In Christ, the well-beloved Son,
The Spirit draws us every one
 To seek our Father's face.

Freedmen of grace, in Love's command,
Before us lies the promised land ;
 Jesus will lead us in.
But, 'neath His banner, many a foe
Our souls must meet, and overthrow,
 And many a field must win.

On to the fight ; but not alone ;
The Lord of all, the Mighty One,
 Is ever watching nigh :
All human pride shall lick the dust ;
But they, who place in Him their trust,
 Are sure of victory.

God is our strength ; His love alone
For sinful man redemption won,
 And will salvation win.
If we but offer all our heart,
His Spirit will the power impart
 To conquer all our sin.

O Lord of all, save us, we pray,
From that sad end, declared to-day,
Of life apart from love.
Keep pure our human sympathy,
Let every brother's feeblest cry
Our mercy quickly move.



Second Sunday after Trinity.

THE COLLECT.

O LORD, who never failest to help and govern them whom Thou dost bring up in Thy stedfast fear and love ; Keep us, we beseech Thee, under the protection of Thy good providence, and make us to have a perpetual fear and love of Thy holy Name ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE EPISTLE I *John* iii. 13.
 THE GOSPEL *Luke* xiv. 16.
 FIRST LESSONS { Morning ... *Judges* iv.
 { Evening ... *Judges* v.

THE connection between the teaching of this and last Sunday is to be found in the Epistle. " My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue ; but in deed and in truth. . . . And this is His commandment, That we should believe on the Name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He gave us commandment. And he that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him." The Gospel and the

Lessons are the best practical commentaries upon these words. And they will at once explain the meaning of the Collect.

In the Epistle for last Sunday St. John taught us, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love." To-day we have prayed that God will "make us to have a perpetual fear and love of His holy Name." Very easily reconcilable are these two statements of truth. St. John is speaking of the lowest kind of fear, the fear of the natural man, the *slavish dread* of those who know not the Father. We pray for that fear which is the work of the Holy Spirit in the child of God, *filial reverence*. If we believe what Trinity Sunday taught us, that, through the only begotten Son, we "have access by one Spirit to the Father;" if, "because we are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father,"—that belief will soon raise our hearts far above a cowardly dread of the power of God. Our service will not be the service of constraint; it will be the offering of a free heart.

On the other hand, if "*hereby* perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us;" if our sins necessitated

the death of the Son of man; if He will have nothing less from us than a love "in deed and in truth," a love which must bear the judgment of One who "is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things,"—how can we but fear while we love, lest our love should not be made perfect, and lest by any means we should let slip the treasures of grace He has given us? The more we know of our Father's love to us, the more we shall revere His Name, His word, His laws. While we love Him as our Father, we shall fear Him as our King.

As we read the Lessons, we must carefully bear in mind why it was that God had sold His people "into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan;" and they cried unto Him for deliverance from the terrible evils inflicted upon them. It was because they had "not destroyed the heathen as the Lord commanded them." They had mingled themselves among the enemies of the Lord. And why? Because they had lost fear for their invisible King; and they had grown cold in their love for Him who had done so great things for them. They needed, as we do, to pray for fear and love of His holy Name. Thus, the last stirring words of Deborah's song were a warning to *them*.

“So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord : but let them that love Him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might” !

The Gospel must be read by the light of the Collect and the Epistle. Why was it that the guests bidden to the great supper all began with one consent to make excuse for not coming when all things were ready? Was it not because they had neither fear nor love for him who had invited them? Fear would have made them say, “Let us not keep away, lest we provoke his displeasure.” Love would have made them say, “Let us give up our own convenience and pleasure to honour his invitation, because of his kindness to us, to prove our gratitude to him.”

How strikingly does this apply to those who make excuse for not coming to the Holy Communion! Reverence for Christ, their King, should prompt them to say, “I cannot keep away,” because He has said, “This do.” Love would prompt them to say, “I will prepare myself to go, because on the same night in which He was betrayed He said, “This do, in remembrance of Me.”



SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

“ FEAR AND LOVE.”

THE COLLECT, THE GOSPEL.

Who can stay when Christ is calling ?
Who can go where God is found ?
Conscience warns with voice appalling,
Mercy calls with sweeter sound,
“ Shrink not from Thy Father’s presence :
Let not fear o’er love abound ! ”

Lord of hosts ! who would not fear Thee,
Ever holy, just, and true ?
Saints and angels dwelling near Thee
Cannot bear Thy glory’s view :
Hushed in awful adoration,
They their work of love pursue.

Father, Thee supremely loving,
Thee in all may we confess ;
Loving most Thy love’s approving,
Fearing most to love Thee less ;
Saved by fear from wilful sinning,
Led by love to holiness.



Third Sunday after Trinity.

THE COLLECT.

O LORD, we beseech Thee mercifully to hear us ; and grant that we, to whom Thou hast given an hearty desire to pray, may by Thy mighty aid be defended and comforted in all dangers and adversities ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE EPISTLE I *Peter* v. 5.

THE GOSPEL *Luke* xv. 1.

FIRST LESSONS { Morning ... I *Samuel* ii.
 { Evening ... I *Samuel* iii.

IF we have that which we prayed for last week, a spirit of fear and love of God's Name, it will show itself first of all in this, that we shall have a "heartly desire to pray ;" for prayer is at once the sign that our souls are humbled under the hand of our mighty King, and are longing for the presence of our loving Father. And we may be sure that, in answer to prayer, we shall by His "mighty aid be defended and comforted in all dangers and adversities."

I. The Epistle will at once give us the ground of this Sunday's teaching. "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time: casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you." We may take with these words the seventh and ninth verses of this Morning's Lesson; "The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich: He bringeth low, and lifteth up. . . . He will keep the feet of His saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail."

II. Turn to the Lessons. What an example is Hannah of one to whom God had "given an hearty desire to pray"! We are told in the previous chapter that she prayed: "only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard." And God heard the silent breathings of her devout soul: He gave grace to this humble one. She was by His mighty aid defended and comforted in the hour of adversity.

Look again at Samuel, whose history we begin to read to-day. It was because he had been from infancy "lent to the Lord" by his pious mother, and had been taught to turn his heart to Him in constant and earnest prayer,

that "Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with the Lord and also with men." The Lord "kept the feet," and gave grace to the soul of that humble saint.

Look, on the other hand, at the sons of Eli,—Hophni and Phinehas,—profane, faithless, prayerless, profligate; making "the Lord's people to transgress," instead of guiding them into the way of righteousness! How did God resist these proud souls! How little did all their strength prevail, their strength of outward privileges and their strength of arm! What had they to defend them and comfort them when the hour of danger and adversity came? How soon we behold them "silent in darkness"!

III. Then turn to the Gospel. How does our blessed Lord resist those proud self-righteous Pharisees, who fancied that the strength of their own works would prevail to win the kingdom of Heaven! How, on the other hand, He manifests His grace to the publicans and sinners, when in humble penitence they turned to Him!

It must be observed that the Gospel follows immediately after last Sunday's. That parable of the supper and the guests seems to have come home at once to these poor publicans and sinners. They felt that they

were meant by the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind, in the streets and lanes of the city. They were assured from the works and teaching of Jesus, that at *His* feast there would be room for such as they were. They drew near to hear Him, and He drew near to receive them and to save them. Full of comfort is this to us all. If only we have a "heartly desire to pray," we may be sure that He has a merciful willingness to hear. If we cast all our care upon Him, He tells us that He careth for us. If we resist the adversary ever seeking our destruction, not thinking by our own strength to prevail against him, but "stedfast in the faith," we know that He will keep our feet. And, after we have suffered awhile, He will make us "perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle us."



THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

COLLECT, EPISTLE, GOSPEL.

There is where'er we go,
 Though calm the scene and fair,
 A fierce unsleeping foe,
 With many a deadly snare.

But if one prayer can rise,
And find our heart's true King,
The tempter vanquish'd flies,
Angels around us sing.

There is on each and all
A Shepherd's watchful eye :
None can unpitied fall,
And none unheeded cry.
When sin has triumph'd most,
And hope is waning fast,
He comes to seek the lost,
He loves them to the last.

O Father, ever kind,
Let us Thy comfort share,
And Thy protection find,
Though feeble be our prayer.
Good Shepherd, gather in
Thy faint and scatter'd sheep
To that one fold where sin
And death for ever sleep.



Fourth Sunday after Trinity.



THE COLLECT.

O GOD, the protector of all that trust in Thee, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy ; Increase and multiply upon us Thy mercy ; that, Thou being our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal : Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake our Lord. Amen.

THE EPISTLE *Romans* viii. 18.

THE GOSPEL *Luke* vi. 36.

FIRST LESSONS { Morning ... I *Samuel* xii.
 { Evening ... I *Samuel* xiii.



IT may be said that the end of all God's dealings with us is to bring us to the confession contained in the Collect ; to make us know that He is the Protector of all that trust in Him ; that without Him nothing is strong, nothing is holy ; to make us own Him for our Ruler and Guide ; to make us judge of things temporal in comparison with things eternal. The cause of all our sins and sorrows is simply

this : we will not trust wholly in Him. We dream that of ourselves we are strong, and by ourselves can be holy. We choose our own rulers and guides. We suffer our hearts to become engrossed in the passing things of this world, and for their sake lose the glories of the kingdom of Heaven.

I. *The Epistle* reminds us why it most commonly happens thus with us. It is because we cannot bear "the sufferings," without and within, "of this present time." The sacrifice of our own selfish enjoyments, which God's kingdom requires of us, seems too great. The crossing of our natural will by the service of Christ is too much for us. We sometimes think it hard that our Heavenly Father should withhold from us so long His promised blessing ; and we grow impatient under the tribulation through which He leads us to glory. Inverting St. Paul's noble words in the Epistle, we sometimes reckon that the glory which shall be revealed in us is not worthy to be compared with the sufferings of this present time. If it be so, the whole creation, as St. Paul's words teach us, rebukes our impatience ; for how long and earnestly has *it* been waiting for the restoration of man, its head, to the glory lost through sin ! "For the creature" (*i.e.*, the irrational, irresponsible part

of God's creation) "was made subject to vanity" (*i.e.*, became liable to decay and death), "not willingly" (*i.e.*, not on account of any exercise of its own evil will), "but by reason of him who hath subjected the same" (*i.e.*, in consequence of the fall of man, its head) "in hope" (*i.e.*, of rising with man, with whom it had fallen). "Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God." If, therefore, "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now," waiting for "the manifestation of the sons of God," surely the sons of God, who have "the first-fruits of the Spirit," cannot think it hard, if, for a little while, until their Father's time comes for the revelation of their glory, they must "groan within themselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of their body." It is enough for them to know that the *kingdom of grace* is theirs: they must patiently wait and strive for the *kingdom of glory*.

II. Turning to the Gospel, how much is implied in those opening words, "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful"! It was of His great mercy alone that we were called to His kingdom: by His mercy alone we live. Can we not therefore bear with mercy

the evils inflicted upon us by our fellow-men, which make so great a portion of "the sufferings of this present time"? Should we not judge as our Heavenly Master judges, forgive as He forgives, give as He gives, and measure as He measures? How little have *we* to bear from the opposition of the evil world, in *carrying on* His kingdom, compared with what *He* bore *in founding* it! Here, then, we have one sure and simple test of our being under the rule and guidance of God. Are we striving to be like Him? Are we imitating His mercy, and kindness, and goodness? For only thus shall we "so pass through things temporal that we finally lose not the things eternal."

III. The First Lessons for to-day contain the key to all the after history of God's people in the Old Testament Scriptures. "God was their King," as Samuel reminded them. With Him for their Ruler and Guide, they had passed through many dangers, overcome mighty enemies, and attained to their present prosperity. But they were not content to "walk by faith," under an invisible Ruler: their carnal minds longed to "walk by sight," under a king like themselves, and chosen by themselves. And God, as He said by His prophet Hosea, "gave them a king in His

anger." He let them have their choice, and made that choice their harder probation. The rest of the Old Testament history describes how they bore that probation, and how their self-will brought its own punishment.

Saul, whose history begins in this Evening's Lesson, was a fair sample of the kind of king they would be likely to choose. What a moral coward was he, for all his great strength! how self-willed, self-confident, superstitious, and mean! He was a man after man's heart. A few such kings as he very soon brought the chosen nation into the very bondage of corruption; for, to refer to the words of the Gospel, "the blind" led "the blind," and both fell. The root-sin of the people, the cause of all their past and present evils, was the root-sin of Saul—*self-will*—leading to impatience of God's rule and rejection of His invisible kingdom.

Do not all the services for to-day remind us that our root-sin, the cause of all our corruptions and sorrows, is the same? Do we not see, therefore, the necessity of earnestly praying, in the words of the Collect, that God will be "our Ruler and Guide" through things temporal, so that we finally lose not the things eternal?



FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

“We have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king.”—FIRST LESSON.

This is the sorrow of my life,
To feel that I have been
With perfect love itself at strife,
Which wrought to make me clean :
I would not hear that gentle voice,
Still pleading for my good,
Nor foolish own the selfish choice
That mine own peace withstood.

I said, “ I *will* be what I *must* ; ”
When I had better cried,
“ In Thee, O Lord, is all my trust,
Who for my sin hast died.”
I thought in righteousness and truth
To build a stable throne ;
And now, 'mid ruined hopes of youth,
Sits penitence alone.

O great Redeemer, King of all !
Set up Thy broken throne
Within my heart, that pride may fall,
And all that pride has known.
Let me Thy strength in weakness prove,
Thy light in darkness see ;
And I will trust Thy guiding love,
And rest my hope in Thee !

Fifth Sunday after Trinity.

THE COLLECT.

GRANT, O Lord, we beseech Thee, that the course of this world may be so peaceably ordered by Thy governance, that Thy Church may joyfully serve Thee in all godly quietness ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE EPISTLE	... ..	... ..	... ..	... ..	1 <i>Peter</i> iii. 8.
THE GOSPEL	... ..	... ..	... ..	... ..	<i>Luke</i> v. 1.
FIRST LESSONS	{	Morning	... ..	... ..	1 <i>Samuel</i> xv.
		Evening	... ..	... ..	1 <i>Samuel</i> xvii.

THE beautiful words of to-day's Collect cannot fail to come home to all our hearts. We all eagerly long for the time when the Church shall joyfully serve God in godly quietness. We know that this can only be when the course of this world is peaceably ordered ; and no power or wisdom or goodness of ours can accomplish this. It must be by God's governance, by the kingdoms of this world becoming the kingdom of His Son. The great battle with the falsehood, the sin, and the selfishness of this world, is

the Lord's. To Him we must look, waiting His good time, and trusting entirely to His grace.

I. The First Lessons teach us the right and wrong ways of accomplishing the prayer in the Collect.

It is very possible to obtain, for a time at least, both a peaceable ordering of the course of this world, and a joyful quietness in the Church, even as Saul did, by unholy compromise of principle, by partial obedience to the commands of God, by cowardly yielding to those whom he was bound to govern, and sparing the best of the things which God commanded to be wholly destroyed. But how ruinous to himself, and to his people, was this hollow and unprincipled peace!

Our Christian life must be a continual warfare against the evil of our own hearts and of the mighty world around us. The voice of God comes to each one of us, as to Saul, bidding us go up and fight against, and destroy, the sins which are our true enemies and His. Upon our obedience to this great command depends the kingdom of which He has made us inheritors. And is not our main temptation the same as that which overcame and brought to shame Saul:

to forget that the battle is the Lord's ; to imagine that we can fight in our own strength, according to our own minds, making our own terms with the enemy ; or, to be "greatly dismayed and afraid" at the vastness of form, and terribleness of threatening, with which that enemy comes against us ?

Behold Saul and David together in the presence of the Goliath who has dared to defy the armies of the living God ! One or the other must represent our meeting with the prince of this world, when he comes forth mightily against us. There is but one way to victory and glory : it is, to go forth in the name of the living God, knowing, as David did, that the battle is His.

II. From the Epistle let us learn how the true David goes forth to overcome the Goliath of this evil world, how the course of this world may be peaceably ordered by God's governance, and how the Church can alone be brought to serve Him in godly quietness. If the battle is His, and we are utterly helpless without Him, we must nevertheless go forth and fight with Him. So long as we know that "the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers," there is nothing to make us afraid, however terrible our foes may ap-

pear. And so long as we "refrain our tongue from evil, and our lips that they speak no guile," eschewing evil and doing good, seeking peace and ensuing it, we shall both ourselves "love life and see good days," and we shall also help forward the accomplishment of the prayer that God's Church may joyfully serve Him in all godly quietness.

III. From the Gospel we may derive our best consolation when we have realized, and are striving to live out, the truth set forth in the Collect. We may sometimes be tempted to think that the world, being such as it is, can never be "so peaceably ordered" that the Church may joyfully serve God with godly quietness. The work of winning souls out of the great deep of this world is so hard: men are so slow to yield themselves to the power of Divine truth. Let us, then, never forget that *He* is with us, and we are doing His work, whose word gathered out of the obedient deep that "great multitude of fishes," when the hardy fisherman had confessed, "We have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the net." Oh let us trust Him to order the course of this world even as the waters of the Lake of Gennesaret, and to fill His Church with joyful servants,

as He filled the fisherman's net with that wondrous draught !



FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE COLLECT, THE GOSPEL.

Still comes Thy cheering word to faithful ears,
 "Let down your nets again ;"
 When hope grows dim with passing doubts and
 fears,
 And labour seems in vain :
 The world may rage, but Thou, O Prince of Peace,
 With still, prevailing voice,
 Canst make the storm of human passion cease,
 And all Thy Church rejoice.

Though hard our work, reluctant souls to win
 From this world's troublous deep ;
 And harder still, from luring baits of sin,
 Our own weak hearts to keep,—
 Thee, Lord, we trust, whose mighty "Peace, be
 still,"
 The storm was fain to own,
 Whose silent law the fisher's net could fill
 With wealth before unknown.



Sixth Sunday after Trinity.

THE COLLECT.

O GOD, who hast prepared for them that love Thee such good things as pass man's understanding; Pour into our hearts such love toward Thee, that we, loving Thee above all things, may obtain Thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE EPISTLE ... ..	...	...	...	...	<i>Romans</i> vi. 3.
THE GOSPEL ... ..	...	...	...	...	<i>Matthew</i> v. 20.
FIRST LESSONS	{	Morning	...	...	<i>2 Samuel</i> xii.
		Evening	...	...	<i>2 Samuel</i> xix.

THERE does not at first sight appear any close connection between the teaching of to-day and that of past Sundays, nor between the Collect, Epistle, Gospel, and Lessons; but indeed there is, if we search earnestly for it. We have learnt the necessity and blessedness of being in the kingdom of God, through Christ; withdrawing our hearts from the guidance of the world, and fixing them on Him. The question now arises, How

shall we secure the promises of that kingdom? What must distinguish the life of those who are true to their King?

I. To this question an answer is at once returned in the Collect. It is only for them that love Him that God has prepared "such good things as pass man's understanding," in the kingdom of His Son. If, therefore, we would obtain His promises, "which exceed all that we can desire," we must love Him above all things, and give proof of such a love by holiness of life. God expects of us fruits of righteousness in proportion to the greatness of our privileges.

II. The Epistle requires a greater and more particular explanation than can be given here. We may well study it on our knees before God, to realize what we profess to be, and the high walk of life unto which our baptism has pledged us. "Know we not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?" If we do know this, it will be impossible to yield ourselves to the service of sin; for as is the Head, so are the members. If Christ died for sin, we must reckon ourselves dead unto sin through Him. If death has no more dominion over Him, neither has it over us in Him. If He was "raised up from the

dead by the glory of the Father," we are raised up with Him; we must reckon ourselves to be alive unto God through Him. "Our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed;" that is, our sinful nature, with the affections and lusts, is doomed to certain death, though it may be slow in dying, in order "that henceforth we should not serve sin." It may sometimes even now make us feel its fascination, and draw us under its power; but it cannot *bind us to its service*. We are freed from it, from its tyrannical sway, from its hard conditions, from its fearful consequences. If only we love God above all things, however many infirmities of the flesh we may have to mourn over, we have the sweet assurance that we are alive unto Him through Jesus Christ our Lord. Only let us hate sin with all our hearts, and fight against it as the worst foe to our best interests.

III. Turning to the Gospel, let us observe at once how the meaning of our Lord's words is given us in the Collect. "Jesus said unto His disciples, Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of Heaven." The righteousness taught by the scribes and Pharisees

reached only to the *outside of man's life*: it did not touch the inward spirit. Its measure was the *letter* of the law. It left men servants of sin, while it allowed them to claim the advantages of the service of God. It said, "Thou shalt not kill;" but it did not repress the angry and bitter words, and the malicious thoughts, which tend to murder.

The righteousness taught by Christ, and made ours by union with Him, reaches to the whole man: it is a spiritual holiness, resting short of nothing but this;—*loving God above all things*. For such a righteousness we must pray; and such He by His Spirit will work in us.

IV. How sad and strange is the contrast between the First Lesson of last Sunday evening, and those of to-day! We beheld David, the man after God's own heart, in all the glory of triumphant faith, bearing before Saul the head of the mighty foe who had dared to defy the armies of the living God: we behold him to-day vanquished by a mightier foe than Goliath, convicted by God's prophet of foulest offence; deeply penitent, but sorely corrected for his sin against God. Even *he* had not loved God above all things, else he would not so readily have yielded to that sin which He hates. He

had withdrawn his heart from his allegiance to his true King. He had made himself "the servant of sin;" he must therefore receive the wages of that service. He must bear the consequences of his lofty position: so eminent a transgressor of the Divine law must be made to appear an eminent example of the vindication of that law. Does any one think to excuse a lax and low spiritual walk by the example of the sin of the man after God's heart? Oh, let him study well the opening of the First Evening Lesson! That bitter cry over his son Absalom was but one of the penal consequences of his sin. How many waves of sorrow had already gone over his soul, raised by that sin of which we read this morning!

But we must not measure ourselves by David. Our standard of holiness is far higher than his; for we have privileges and powers unknown, except in prophecy, to him. The death of Christ is our measure of sin: the life of Christ is our example of holiness.



SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

FIRST MORNING LESSON, COLLECT, EPISTLE.

What brings at last the mighty David down,
And drags in dust that bright exalted crown?—
'Tis Sin, the foe of man, a stronger far
Than all his valour slew in open war.

What can prolong his penitential cry,
When God Himself the sin has passed by?—
'Tis Love, the heart's true sun, distils in tears
The cloud of wrong it now no longer fears.

O dreadful Sin! whose breath can so destroy
The root of ours, the growth of others' joy.
O blessed Love! whose hand can hold us fast,
And win through all the victory at last.

Sin cannot bind us if we will not bow :
Love's happy service all may enter now.
From sin to save our Saviour once was dead :
For love to gain arose our living Head.

Take all our hearts, O Love! and wholly reign,
That Sin may never more his sway regain ;
So nearer drawn, and more conformed to thee,
More surely ours thy promised bliss shall be.



Seventh Sunday after Trinity.

THE COLLECT.

LORD of all power and might, who art the author and giver of all good things ; Graft in our hearts the love of Thy Name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of Thy great mercy keep us in the same ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE EPISTLE *Romans vi. 19.*

THE GOSPEL *Mark viii. 1.*

FIRST LESSONS { Morning *2 Samuel xxi.*
 { Evening *2 Samuel xxiv.*

IF our minds recur to the teaching of last Sunday, it must be with something of depression. How far are we from loving God above all things ! How shallow and contracted is our righteousness compared with that to which our Saviour calls us ! How little we live unto God as those who have been planted together in the likeness of Christ's resurrection ! How terribly, to some of us, comes home the warning of David's fall and punishment ! What

need, therefore, have we all to make the Collect for to-day the prayer of our lives! Yes; there is but one hope and consolation for us: to draw nearer to Him who is the Lord of all power and might; to pray of Him that He will graft in our hearts the love of His Name; that He will increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of His great mercy keep us in the same. That He is the true and only Lord of our lives, almighty and most merciful; that apart from Him we shall surely die, but with Him we shall find the bread of life, if we seek it by faith: this it is the object of the Epistle and Gospel to teach us.

I. The Epistle for last Sunday taught us of our *life* in Christ, the promise of which was sealed to us in Baptism: to-day we are taught of the *service* to which that life pledges us. We are dead with Christ, our Head, to the service of sin: we must live with Christ in the service of holiness. Everything is promised us in Christ: increase of true religion, nourishment in all goodness, and preservation. But our will is free: it remains with us whether we will keep or cast away our life in Him, whether we will choose or reject His service. But we cannot serve two masters. If we yield ourselves to be "the servants of sin,"

from which Christ died to set us free, we must receive its wages, death. If we yield ourselves to become "the servants of righteousness," which Christ rose again to give us, we shall have the gift of God, eternal life. We must bear all the consequences of the service we choose. We must rise or fall with the Lord and Master of our lives.

II. Now this remark will help us to a profitable reading of the First Lessons for to-day, which in their turn will serve to illustrate the Epistle. When the Jews added to all their sins this, that they asked a king, when the Lord was their King, they made themselves one as a nation with the earthly ruler they had chosen. He was the head, they the members. Their interests were identical, as their national life was one. They must needs suffer for each other's sins, as they would rejoice in each other's honours and virtues. Thus, in this Morning's Lesson, the three years' famine under which the nation suffered is on account of "Saul, and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites." But the punishment of Saul's sin fell upon the people before it reached his family. So, in the Evening Lesson, David's sin in numbering the people is punished with a pestilence which smites down thousands of the people.

“I have sinned, and I have done wickedly,” cries the royal penitent: “but these sheep, what have they done?” David could not see, as we see, what the people had done. They had rejected the Lord from being their King. They had chosen a sinful man for their head and the lord of their lives. They had, to refer to the image used in the Epistle, yielded themselves to be the servants of man, and therefore sin in man. They must therefore fall with their head, and share his punishment.

III. In the Gospel we perceive—and oh, how full of comfort it is!—the “Lord of all power and might” nourishing His people, that He might graft in their hearts the love of His Name. He looks with compassion upon that famished multitude in the wilderness, even though they had not claimed Him as the true King of Israel, though they were the descendants of those who had of old rejected the Lord. See how the Good Shepherd wins back those lost sheep to Himself by a sign of Divine love! He seeks to make them understand, by this miraculous feeding of their bodies, that the gift of God, eternal life, is to be found in Him alone. He would have them ask of their *soul*, their whole life, the question which was asked of their mere body: “Whence can *a man* satisfy these men with

bread here in the wilderness?" What had the whole race of kings, from Saul downwards, done for them? What had their national life become through them? What fruit had they of all that they had done in their past history? The wages of sin—death. Now let them see their true King, and turn unto Him, and find "the gift of God, eternal life."

Let us ask ourselves, in its spirit at least, the question of the Gospel, "Whence can *a man* satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness?" What have our souls gained from the service of sin, and of the sinful world? How can the deep cravings of our hearts be satisfied by mere human affection and earthly prosperity? Where is our chief good, our sure rest, our safe guide, our eternal life?

Surely the answer to these questions is the prayer of to-day's Collect, that most beautiful prayer, which does indeed express all that we can desire or ask of God.



SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

“The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.”—*EPISTLE.*

“From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness?”—*GOSPEL.*

In the desert, far from home,
Faint and weary, Lord, we come ;
In Thy presence only sure
Of the bread that can endure :
Life with Thee is all we pray ;
Send us not, O Lord, away !

Thou art nature's mighty Lord ;
Thou art love in deed and word ;
Thou art mercy, truth, and right,
Shining in commingled light ;
Thou art everlasting day :
Send us not, O Lord, away !

Come with us, where duty calls,
To the temple's sacred walls :
Thou art all we look for there ;
Thou fulfillest all our prayer :
Life with Thee is all we pray ;
Turn us not, O Lord, away !

Leave us not, O Shepherd good !
Still we crave Thy sweetest food ;
Thou canst all our need supply ;
If Thou feed us not, we die :
Life in Thee is all we pray ;
Turn us not, O Lord, away !

Eighth Sunday after Trinity.

THE COLLECT.

O GOD, whose never-failing providence ordereth all things both in heaven and earth ; We humbly beseech Thee to put away from us all hurtful things, and to give us those things which be profitable for us ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE EPISTLE	... ..	<i>Romans</i> viii. 12.
THE GOSPEL	... ..	<i>Matthew</i> vii. 15.
FIRST LESSONS	{ Morning	... I <i>Kings</i> xiii.
	{ Evening	... I <i>Kings</i> xvii.

THERE is an evident connection between the teaching of to-day and that of last Sunday. We contrasted the service of sin, and its wages, death, from which Christ died to deliver us, with the service of righteousness, and its gift, eternal life, which Christ rose to gain for us. We saw represented in the sufferings of the Jews, as described in the First Lessons, the miserable end of withdrawing our hearts from our true King. We

were reminded in the Gospel of the blessedness of following Him "from whom all good things do come," who alone can feed and sustain our spirits in the wilderness of this world. And now, to-day, the question is continually pressed upon us, what evidence are we giving that we are abiding in the life of God to which we were called in Christ? What proof can we adduce that we are faithful to the service to which that life pledged us? If we are in union with Him, "whose never-failing providence ordereth all things in heaven and earth," are we seeking of Him "to put away from us all hurtful things,"—whatever thoughts, desires, words, and deeds tend to injure our true life; "and to give us those things which be profitable for us,"—whatever will bear witness "that we are the children of God, and, if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ"? No mere belief that Jesus is our Saviour, no looking unto Him from afar, will secure eternal life; but our whole life must be under the guidance of His Spirit. No loud professions of service to Him will gain for us admission into the kingdom of Heaven; but we must do the will of our Heavenly Father which is in Heaven.

I. If we study the Gospel first, it will help us to understand the Epistle.

“A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. . . . Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in Heaven.” We profess to be grafted into Christ, the Tree of Life: if so, we must be known by bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit of Christ. We profess to have the Son of God for our Lord: if so, we must be, under the leading of His Spirit, doing His Father’s will. Whatsoever teachers set before us a lower calling than this, encouraging us to hope for eternal life hereafter without a spiritual life now, are as “false prophets,” who come to us “in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.” Let us beware of them.

II. The Epistle has been admirably selected to follow those for the last two Sundays. It sets before us indeed the practical inference from the great truths they taught us. Such being the life whereunto we have been called, and the service to which we are pledged, “we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.” Our sinful nature can no longer *claim* our service; for Christ our Life has

set us free from that bondage. "If we live after the flesh,"—if we suffer ourselves to be ruled by evil and corrupt affections, "we shall die,"—we shall lose the gift of life we have received in Christ. That life can only be retained, and abound more and more unto *eternal* life, by our mortifying "the deeds of the body," by our putting away, through the power of the Spirit, all the affections and lusts of our corrupt nature which hinder us from manifesting the fruits of holiness, and doing the work of our Heavenly Father. We must give proof that we "are the sons of God,"—growing in the life which He has given us in Christ,—by being thus "led by the Spirit of God." We have the highest and best motives to holiness of life; therefore should our aims be the highest. "For we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear;" we do not obey God's law for fear of His displeasure: "but we have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father;" we "mortify the deeds of the body," for love of our Heavenly Father, that we may be His true children under the guidance of His Holy Spirit. For we know that only "if children" can we be heirs of His eternal and glorious kingdom. And believing that we are "joint-

heirs with Christ," we are willing to "suffer with Him," crucifying "the flesh, with the affections and lusts," "that we may be also glorified together."

III. Very strikingly will the First Lessons be found to illustrate, and serve to impress upon us, what has been already said.

I. The "man of God" from Judah is bidden, by the word of the Lord, to go to Beth-el and prophesy against the altar which Jeroboam had erected there. He is simply to discharge his holy mission, holding no communication with the sinful men of the place. As he himself says, so nobly rejecting the temptation of the king to come home, and refresh himself, and receive a reward, "It was charged me by the word of the Lord, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest." And what did this Divine injunction imply, but that he was to be "led by the Spirit," to walk not "after the flesh"? But he listened to the seductive voice of the false prophet, and disobeyed the word of God; and his end was death. How easily may this story be applied to ourselves, especially when we take into consideration that warning of our blessed Lord in the Gospel, "Beware of false prophets, which

come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves."

2. Compare with this sad story what is recorded of Elijah in the Evening Lesson. He too had to prophesy against a wicked king; and then was bidden by the word of the Lord to turn and hide himself by the brook Cherith. However tempted he may have been to do otherwise (for this indeed was no slight trial of his faith), "he went and did according unto the word of the Lord." He entirely trusted that unseen King "whose providence ordereth all things both in heaven and earth." He was assured that, no matter where his dwelling might be, and no matter what the work for God in which he might be engaged, God would put away from him all hurtful things, and give him those things which were profitable for him. It was this perfect trust in God, this ready and all-sacrificing spirit of obedience to His word, which made his after-life so great, his works so mighty, his end so glorious.

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

MORNING AND EVENING FIRST LESSONS, COLLECT
EPISTLE, GOSPEL.

Who truly loves our Father's word,
And makes with *that* his life accord,
Though he may seem of hope bereft,
Shall not in helpless need be left.
Think how, when all the world forsook,
God fed His prophet by the brook !

Who turns aside from duty's call,
For smoother paths, shall surely fall :
God's angel host, on him intent,
The wanderer mark, with bows all bent.
Think how the seer, who dared rebel
By Bethel's road, dishonoured fell !

O Father, whose most righteous will
All things in Heaven and earth fulfil,
Thy watchful love true good provides
For him whose heart Thy Spirit guides ;
And hurtful things no more can be,
To him whose life is hid in Thee.



Ninth Sunday after Trinity.

THE COLLECT.

GRANT to us, Lord, we beseech Thee, the spirit to think and do always such things as be rightful ; that we, who cannot do any thing that is good without Thee, may by Thee be enabled to live according to Thy will ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE EPISTLE I *Corinthians* x. 1.

THE GOSPEL *Luke* xvi. 1.

FIRST LESSONS { Morning ... I *Kings* xviii.
 { Evening ... I *Kings* xix.

FROM every part of the appointed services for to-day we hear a call to consistency and perseverance : from the Collect, wherein we pray for “ the spirit to think and do always such things as be rightful ; ” from the Gospel, reminding us that we are stewards of the manifold grace of God, and if we are unfaithful to this our stewardship it will be taken from us ; from the Epistle, bidding “ him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall ; ” and from

the First Lesson for the Morning, which tells us how God's prophet pleaded with His wavering and half-hearted people, "If the Lord be God, follow Him."

I. The Collect recalls to our minds the Epistle for last Sunday. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." But this guidance of the Spirit is evidenced not by our occasionally cherishing good thoughts about God, and rising up to good works for His Name's sake; but by a life devoted to His will. We cannot indeed do anything that is good without Him; but with Him, in His Son, by His Spirit, we can be and must be followers of everything that is good. If we desire not to live according to His will, it is plain that we are not abiding in Christ our Life.

II. The Epistle will perhaps serve to impress this lesson upon us most forcibly. "All those things happened unto them for ensamples [types]: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." The whole history of the calling and probation of the Jewish people is typical of our own. Their passage through the Red Sea, which was the great sign that the Lord was their

God, and they were His people, represents our Baptism into Christ, whereby we are consigned to all the blessings of the New Covenant. Their feeding on the manna, in the wilderness, represents our feeding by faith on Christ, the Bread of Life, especially in the Holy Eucharist. Their drinking of the water from the rock represents our enjoyment of the consolations of the Holy Spirit from Christ. Their sins too represent our own. Their temptations are "common to man," such as every human being will be exposed to as long as the world lasts. Very solemn is the warning conveyed in these words: "With *many of them* God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness." Alas, how few of those who passed through the Red Sea afterwards entered into the land of promise! Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth in the Christian Church, who has been called to eternal life in Christ, and has been put under the leading of the Holy Spirit in hope of the heavenly Canaan, take heed lest he fall through the sins that destroyed *them*.

III. Looking from the Epistle to the First Morning Lesson, we see at once that it is but another page in that typical history of God's ancient people so instructive to us. That

multitude gathered on Mount Carmel were the same in spirit as their fathers in the wilderness. They were given to the same sins,—lusting after evil things, idolaters, tempters of God, murmurers against His wise providence,—which had kept so many out of the promised land. Everything indeed had been done by Ahab and Jezebel to seduce them from the faith and worship of the Lord their God, and to make idolatry popular. But there were yet left seven thousand in Israel who had not bowed the knee to Baal : and there were thousands more “halting between two opinions ;” thinking what was right, but not daring to do it ; unable to give up their belief in God, but unwilling to live according to His will. It needed therefore but the sign from Heaven which Elijah gave to draw forth the universal cry, “The Lord, He is the God ; the Lord, He is the God.” Nevertheless it does not appear that they followed Him even after that. This enthusiasm soon subsided, and the spirit of idolatry overmastered their hearts.

IV. The Gospel contains the hardest to interpret of all our Lord’s parables ; but it occupies an important position in the teaching of this Sunday.

It would seem originally to have been spoken with a double application, to the publicans as

an encouragement, and to the Pharisees as a warning. The sin of the publicans was their devotion to the service of the "mammon of unrighteousness." They enriched themselves by unscrupulous means. They abused the stewardship reposed in them by the world. The sin of the Pharisees was radically the same. They "were covetous:" they "devoured widows' houses, and for a pretence made long prayers." They, too, abused their stewardship. To the publicans, therefore, our Lord's words conveyed this encouragement: "If you are truly penitent for your past sinful lives, and desire to follow Me, your King and Redeemer, let not the circumstances of your worldly position deter you. Deal wisely with the unrighteous mammon you have acquired by your abused stewardship in the world. Devote all you have to Him who is the owner and Lord of all. Make friends for eternity; and manifest the same wisdom, and earnestness, and power in the service of your true Master, as you have manifested in the service of the world. If I am the Son of God, sent to claim you in His Name, follow Me with all your hearts and with all you have."

To the Pharisees was conveyed this warning: "Look not upon your wealth as a sign of God's favour to you, the reward of your

piety; but as a stewardship reposed in you by Him. Deal wisely and prudently with that which must so soon be taken from you. Use it for eternity. Take care lest *you*, with all your seeming piety, be serving mammon and not God. Take care lest you be double-hearted, halting between two opinions with respect to the kingdom of God and the kingdom of mammon. If the Lord be God, follow Him with all your hearts."

To us the parable simply brings home the whole teaching of this day: "Whatever the outward circumstances of your life, devote yourselves to God. However little or much the stewardship of wealth intrusted to you by the world, make the best use of it for your eternal life. If Christ be your Master, follow His example. Pray for the spirit 'to think and do always such things as be rightful.'"

V. We must not leave out of notice the First Evening Lesson. We behold Elijah sitting despondent under a juniper-tree in the wilderness, requesting for himself that he may die. What! had *he*, too, lost for a time "the spirit to think and do" what is right? Was *he*, too, halting between two opinions? Yes; like John the Baptist, his great antitype, in the castle of Machærus, he was "offended" in God. Seeing that no great results followed

that enthusiastic confession of God on Mount Carmel; that the covenant of God was still forsaken, His altars thrown down, and he himself seemingly left alone,—he was tempted to think his work had been in vain, and that there was no more left for him to do. He needed, therefore, that lesson which God so mercifully gave him—and gives us through him—that His kingdom in the world must ever be as “a still small voice.” It is advancing, and doing its work, even when we seem the solitary witnesses of it. “If the Lord be God,” we must follow Him, and watch till He reveals for us our special work, though no man stand with us. The time when we are most tempted to despond may be, in God’s providence, the most critical of our life, and be opening out to us our greatest work for the Lord. What great things had Elijah yet to do after the scene recorded in this chapter!

*NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.*

“How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him.”—FIRST MORNING LESSON, GOSPEL, EPISTLE, COLLECT.

And wilt thou waver, O my soul,
When God, thy Father, calleth thee?

Wilt thou despise His wise control,
In foolish struggling to be free ?

The truth alone can freedom give ;
And truth is born of love Divine :
In true obedience learn to live,
And truest freedom shall be thine.

Dream not of rest and lasting joy :
They cannot spring from hearts that sin.
Each passing hour for God employ :
'Tis joy enough His love to win.

He offers Heaven, with all its bliss,
Where sin no more, nor sorrows come :
Oh, better lose the world, than miss
One hour within that glorious home !

It is not safe to halt so long :
Before thee lies the promised land ;
Far off is heard the heavenly song ;
But mighty foes the way withstand.

Arise, my soul, this hour decide :
Yield up to God thy life, thine all ;
Then humbly live ; for cherish'd pride
Will quickly bring a fatal fall.

Look up to God for guiding light ;
Look up to God for helping power :
Distrust not His resistless might,
But *fear thyself* in every hour.

Tenth Sunday after Trinity.

THE COLLECT.

LET Thy merciful ears, O Lord, be open to the prayers of Thy humble servants ; and that they may obtain their petitions make them to ask such things as shall please Thee ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE EPISTLE	... ..	I	<i>Corinthians</i>	xii.	I.
THE GOSPEL	... ..		<i>Luke</i>	xix.	41.
FIRST LESSONS	}	Morning	... ..	I	<i>Kings</i> xxi.
		Evening	... ..	I	<i>Kings</i> xxii.

LAST Sunday we were taught the necessity and blessedness of following God, led by His Spirit "to think and do always such things as be rightful," and to live according to His will. To-day sets before us another sign of true allegiance to the kingdom of God. We must turn continually to Him in prayer. We must seek to be at all times in such a state that our prayers may be acceptable to Him. We must seek the gifts of His Spirit, with a simple view to the glory of His Name.

I. The Epistle teaches us the nature of the spiritual gifts conferred upon the Church, and the principle upon which they are distributed ; so that we may judge what we ought to pray for, if we would please God. St. Paul says in another part of this chapter, "By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body." Therefore spiritual gifts, such as he enumerates, must be only different manifestations of the same Divine Spirit which worketh all in all ; just as the more active exercise of a particular member of the natural body is but a greater manifestation to that member of the presiding mind and ruling will of the man. God divides the endowments of His Spirit to each member of the Church as He wills ; that is, as seems best to Him for the good of the whole Church, and the greater glorifying of His Name by the man himself. If "working of miracles," "prophesyings," "divers kinds of tongues," and other such extraordinary gifts, were necessary in these later times, the Divine Spirit would so manifest His power in particular members of His one body. But these are not necessary ; therefore we must be content to know that "the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." Whatever spiritual wisdom, or knowledge, or power we

need, to enable us to do God's will and fulfil our appointed duties, we shall have. For these we must pray most earnestly and perseveringly, being well assured that such a petition will please God. More than this we must not ask.

II. The Gospel reminds us of one spiritual gift without which all others are vain: the gift to know the things belonging to our peace, and the day of our visitation. If *this* we seek of God with all our hearts; if we ask of Him that we may know and follow such a course of life as will give us peace with Him, with our own consciences, and with all the world; if we ask Him that we may discern every special visitation of His providence, yield to every motion of His Spirit, and obey every call of His grace,—we cannot doubt that such a prayer will please Him, and that such a manifestation of His Spirit will be given us.

As we read of the Lord's weeping over the holy city, and foretelling its fall, let us ponder well what it was that made Him weep, and what caused the fearful ruin He foretold. It was that God's people would not turn unto Him and accept His kingdom. They offered indeed their petitions to Him; but they did not ask the things that pleased Him, because

they did not ask first of all that they might be His. They prayed for the coming of Messiah; but for *a Messiah of their own*, one who should manifest Himself in their way, and rule them after their own will. They gave proof that they had not the Spirit of God, because the voice of the nation "pronounced Jesus accursed." Therefore, not living after the Spirit, they died.

III. From the First Lessons we may learn the danger of living, or rather trying to live, without seeking the manifestation of God's Spirit for our guidance and support.

Ahab had withdrawn his heart from being the servant of God, and become the slave of idolatry: He had "sold himself to work wickedness." Stifling the voice of conscience, and throwing off the holy restraints of the Divine law, he was easily stirred up by Jezebel, his wife, to the worst crimes. Evil influences from without, inasmuch as he listened not to the voice within, nor sought wisdom from above, soon brought him to ruin. That repentance of his, described at the close of the chapter, shows that the light within him was not yet utterly quenched: the flax was still smoking, much as he had done to extinguish it.

In the Evening Lesson what a warning

have we against inquiring of the Lord when we have set up our idols within our hearts, seeking to know His will without a hearty desire to do it. He who hated the prophet of the Lord, because he did "not prophesy good concerning him, but evil," is seduced to his destruction by "a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets," those flatterers whom he trusted.

Are there not "lying spirits" all about us? And what is to save us from being seduced by them to our ruin? Only the daily prayer of the Collect, that God will "make us to ask such things as shall please Him." Only the continual manifestation of His Spirit, to teach us, to guide us, and to help us.



TENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THE COLLECT; THE EPISTLE, "spiritual gifts;" THE GOSPEL, "Christ's tears over the city."

Father, we know Thou lovest well
 To hear Thy children pray;
 And blessings more than tongue can tell
 Thou grantest every day.
 But oh! so little we can know
 What sinful man may have,
 Thy wrath could send no surer woe
 Than granting all we crave.

“Come to Thy temple speedily ;
O Lord, fulfil Thy word :”
Such, year by year, the pious cry
Within the Temple heard :
But when in Salem’s streets at last
Appear’d the Lord of all,
He came to tell her glories past,
To weep her coming fall.

We ask not, with impatient mind,
“When will the Lord appear ?”
For oh, how few Thine eyes would find
Prepared to see Thee near !
We ask a conscience clear of wrong,
A mind assured of right,
A heart that can, by Thee made strong,
In holy ways delight.

For wealth, for learning, or for power,
How can Thy people pray,
Who know full well a single hour
May steal such gifts away ?
We ask a better, nobler gift,
Without corrupting leaven :
We ask for faith and love, to lift
Our ransom’d souls to Heaven.



Eleventh Sunday after Trinity.

THE COLLECT.

O GOD, who declarest Thy almighty power most chiefly in showing mercy and pity; Mercifully grant unto us such a measure of Thy grace, that we, running the way of Thy commandments, may obtain Thy gracious promises, and be made partakers of Thy heavenly treasure; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE EPISTLE *1 Corinthians xv. 1.*

THE GOSPEL *Luke xviii. 9.*

FIRST LESSONS { Morning ... *2 Kings v.*
 { Evening ... *2 Kings ix.*

IN the Collect for last Sunday we prayed that God would make us to ask such things as should please Him. What can we ask better, or more sure to please Him, than is contained in the Collect for to-day? We do not ask at once that we may be "partakers of His heavenly treasure;" but first, that "we, running the way of His commandments,"—eagerly and gladly doing His will,—“may

obtain His gracious promises." We ask for "such a measure of His grace" as will enable us to do this ; because, without grace, the constraining influence of His love by the Spirit, we shall certainly fall far short of it. *The fear of the Lord* may make men *walk* in the way of His commandments, not daring to forsake them, to avoid His judgments. *The love of the Father* alone will make them *run* in that way, delighting to keep them, to obtain His gracious promises. For our God declares His almighty power, not in revealing His wrath against sin, but "most chiefly in showing mercy and pity" to the sinner. That He does so, and how He does so, every passage of the Old and New Testament read to us in the services for to-day will plainly reveal.

I. This blessed truth is strikingly exemplified in the history of Naaman's cleansing, contained in the First Morning Lesson. He was captain of the host of the King of Syria, at that time the great enemy of the chosen people of God. Doubtless many a faithful Israelite was praying in secret that he might be overcome, and, more than that, converted to the knowledge of the true God. God might have answered that prayer by striking down the mighty invader with His ministers of vengeance—the flame, the pestilence, the

earthquake. But His wondrous love preferred another, a quieter, but a surer way. How beautiful is the story of his bringing to God! The little captive maiden's seemingly casual mention of the prophet in Israel who could cleanse; the message of the King of Syria to the King of Israel, showing that the prophet was regarded only in the character of a royal magician or marvel-monger; the King of Israel's horror at the message; the simplicity of the means of cleansing pointed out, and Naaman's contempt of this means:—all is the work of God, from first to last. He is everything: man is nothing. His almighty power is declared in everything, and towards every man; but it is declared "most chiefly in showing mercy and pity" towards that very man who had been the terrible enemy of His people.

II. Secondly, in the Epistle. St. Paul says of himself, "I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

He, too, like Naaman, was fighting against

the people of the Lord. He was breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the Church. Many earnest prayers were doubtless offered by faithful souls that he might be brought down, and rendered powerless against the saints. And God put forth against him His almighty power. He smote him down by "a great light, above the brightness of the sun;" but it was the light of mercy and pity. He heard a voice; but it was the voice of infinite compassion. He was vanquished by a Saviour.

III. Thirdly, in the Gospel. Behold the Pharisee and the publican standing together before the Lord in the Temple! In which of the two is God's almighty power most shown? Whose heart is most conscious of the presence and moved by the power of the High and Holy One? Surely not he who coldly reckons up his own supposed virtues, and congratulates himself before God that he is not such as other men are; but he who is overwhelmed by a sense of utter unworthiness, who cannot lift up so much as his eyes to the dwelling-place of Infinite Purity, but who can yet dare to appeal to one attribute of his God, and pour forth the stifled cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

IV. The First Evening Lesson is most in-

structive by way of contrast. See how Jehu ran in the way of God's commandments as soon as he had been anointed king, to punish the family of Ahab, and to put down the worship of Baal! But it is very evident that the grace of God was not the ruling motive of his works, but his own glorification; therefore we cannot be surprised to find that soon he "took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord God of Israel with all his heart." Contrast his words to Jonadab, "Come, see my zeal for the Lord," with St. Paul's, "I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me"!

One motive principle alone will lead us to give ourselves wholly to God's kingdom, and enable us to maintain our place and do our work therein; to run in the way of God's commandments, that we may obtain His gracious promises,—and that is, the realization of our Heavenly Father's mercy and pity manifested in Christ, and the submission of our hearts to be ruled by His Spirit of love. This is the "measure of grace" for which we pray in the Collect.



ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

“By the grace of God I am what I am.”—EPISTLE,
COLLECT, GOSPEL.

Not, O God, in wrath appalling,
Thou hast rescued me from falling ;
Not Thy voice in thunder calling
 Shook my soul from selfish pride :
Jesus, on the cross revealing
Perfect love, to love appealing,
Brake my heart, and brought it healing,
 In the thought, “ For *me* He died.”

Now of Jesus mercy learning,
More and more my heart is yearning
O'er the sinners, madly spurning
 All their Saviour's pleading grace.
Help me, O my God, to sever
Pride from every best endeavour :
Give me highest aims, but ever
 Let me love the lowest place.



Twelfth Sunday after Trinity.

THE COLLECT.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who art always more ready to hear than we to pray, and art wont to give more than either we desire, or deserve; Pour down upon us the abundance of Thy mercy; forgiving us those things whereof our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask, but through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

THE EPISTLE 2 *Corinthians* iii. 4.

THE GOSPEL *Mark* vii. 31.

FIRST LESSONS { Morning ... 2 *Kings* x.
 { Evening ... 2 *Kings* xviii.

THE teaching of to-day all gathers round those opening words of the Epistle: "Such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God." Indeed, these verses contain the substance of the whole distinctive teaching of

the Gospel, the twofold truth upon which our lives must rest if we would be God's true children now, and share the glories of His kingdom hereafter.

We have perfect trust through Christ Godward. We know that God has revealed Himself as our Father, ever merciful and kind; and that we may draw near to Him in His Son, not in the spirit of bondage to fear, but in the Spirit of adoption. We know that He is, in the words of the Collect, "more ready to hear than we to pray," and "wont to give more than either we desire or deserve;" that He will "pour down upon us the abundance of His mercy; forgiving us those things whereof our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask, but through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, His Son, our Lord."

We know that "our sufficiency is of God," because we are under the glorious ministration of His life-giving Spirit. But we know, too, that "we are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves." All our trust is through Christ. All our power to think, to will, and to do, is of God. All our hope is to be taught, guided, and comforted by His Spirit. We are not even worthy to ask the

good things we need, and are sure that He will give us. Absolute *distrust self-ward*, and perfect *trust God-ward*;—oh, be this our principle through life, and then will the kingdom of our God be certainly glorified in us.

I. Observe what a striking illustration of what we have shown to be the teaching of this day is afforded us in the Gospel. That deaf man, with “an impediment in his speech,” probably caused by his deafness, whom they bring unto Jesus, that He may put His hand upon him, represents us in our insufficiency. We could not, without the healing of Christ, hear the voice of God’s truth, and therefore we could not pray unto Him.

That same man, going forth, after Christ has healed him, together with those who had brought him, to publish the glorious works of His Saviour, represents our sufficiency. We can, and must, use the spiritual faculties He has restored to us, in bearing witness to Him in our own homes and in the world wherever we can find opportunity. Such the Lord Himself has said must be the work of His Church. “Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me.”*

* Acts i. 8.

II. The First Lessons also serve to exemplify the truth of what has been said.

Observe how Jehu describes his "sufficiency," after he had destroyed the whole house of Ahab, and was about to destroy the worshippers of Baal. "Come with me," he says to Jonadab, "and see my zeal for the Lord." A good man would have said, "Come and see what God has done through me His unworthy instrument." But Jehu could only think of himself. It was *his* zeal which had done all this, and deserved so much admiration. Therefore we are not surprised, as was observed last Sunday, to read that "Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord God of Israel with all his heart." For men who are so slow to give God all the glory, and so ready to boast of their good works, are generally half-hearted.

Contrast with his the character of Hezekiah in the Evening Lesson. "He trusted in the Lord God of Israel. . . . He clave to the Lord, and departed not from following Him. . . . And the Lord was with him; and he prospered whithersoever he went." This was the secret of all Hezekiah's greatness and glory;—his perfect trust in God. How much greater was he as a reformer of the Church than Jehu, with all his boasted

zeal! And why? Because he first gave himself to God, and did all as in His presence, through His power, and to His glory.



TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

“Ephphatha.”—COLLECT, GOSPEL.

Could we but hear our Father's word,
And own His loving care,
Our hearts would move in sweet accord
With all that we must bear.

Could we but say, “Thy will be done,”
And all our will resign,
His presence, like a cloudless sun,
In saddest hours would shine.

Blest Saviour! teach our lips to pray
As Thou wilt love to hear;
But open first our hearts, that they
May see Thy presence clear.

We seek not more the truth to *know*,
But more its light to *feel*;
That all our life in Thine may flow,
And Thee in all reveal.



Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity.

THE COLLECT.

ALMIGHTY and merciful God, of whose only gift it cometh that Thy faithful people do unto Thee true and laudable service ; Grant, we beseech Thee, that we may so faithfully serve Thee in this life, that we fail not finally to attain Thy heavenly promises ; through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE EPISTLE	... ..	...	...	...	<i>Galatians</i> iii. 16.
THE GOSPEL	... ..	...	...	...	<i>Luke</i> x. 23.
FIRST LESSONS	{	Morning	...	...	<i>2 Kings</i> xix.
		Evening	...	...	<i>2 Kings</i> xxiii.

THE teaching of to-day is much the same as that of last Sunday. Again and again we are reminded of those words of St. Paul, upon which so much was said, "Our sufficiency is of God." As of God's "only gift" it came that we were called to His kingdom of grace, and reckoned amongst His faithful people, so of His only gift it cometh that we do unto

Him the "true and laudable service" of His faithful people. Vain is all we can do for ourselves, and all that others can do for us, without His Spirit's guidance and aid. It is He who must enable us "so faithfully to serve" Him in this life, "that we fail not finally to attain His heavenly promises."

I. First let us consider the Epistle. St. Paul's argument with the Galatians is in substance this: that the heavenly promises of God were not dependent, as the Jews supposed, upon the law; and that the true and laudable service of God consisted in something deeper and more spiritual than outward obedience to the precepts of that law. The covenant of faith in Christ, he proves, could not be disannulled, and its promise made of none effect, by the law, because it was confirmed of God long before that law was given. The law "was added," not as a means of obtaining the promise," but "because of transgression;" to repress the outbreak of sin by appealing to men's fears, and train them to expect a perfect righteousness hereafter to be revealed,—“till the Seed should come,” that is, Christ, to whom the promise was made. The law could not make men righteous, that is, give them, in the words of the Collect, the "true and laudable service of God," because it could not give

life. For men must truly live before they can truly serve the living God. Therefore, since in Christ alone is life, in Him alone can be the promise of eternal life ; since He alone can deliver from the sin under which the Scripture hath concluded all, He alone can enable men "so faithfully to serve" Him in this life, that they may attain His heavenly promise.

II. Turning to the Gospel, we at once detect in the question of the lawyer the working of the same spirit of error which St. Paul is reasoning against in the Epistle. "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He fancied there was good in himself, which of himself he could do; or, in the language of the Collect, that of man it could come to do unto God "true and laudable service." He dreamt that eternal life could be inherited by his own good works. Nay, he was not even afraid to be tested by the deeper principle of the law, by love towards God and man; thus clearly showing that he could not understand the depth and breadth of that love. The parable of the good Samaritan, in which the Lord answers his question, "Who is my neighbour?" seems to have had a two-fold aim. First, it convinced him that a poor despised Samaritan could be an example of the broadest and deepest love of his neighbour, and therefore

could do unto God a more laudable service than many a boasting Jew. Secondly, it represented the helplessness of man, left only to the ministrations of the law, and the blessings he has received through the compassion of God in Christ. What Jesus said to those who heard His words, He now says to each one of us: "Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see." Blessed, indeed, are they whose faithful minds can read in this beautiful parable what Christ has done for their souls, and also the high and noble service to which He calls them, under the leading of His loving Spirit.

III. We must study the First Lessons with those opening words of the Gospel before us: "I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them." Then surely the chapters which describe the reigns of Hezekiah and Josiah, two of the greatest of the Jewish kings, will be most instructive.

I. Hezekiah, in the hour of trouble and danger, could turn to "the living God," whose dwelling was "between the cherubim," the "God of all the kingdoms of the earth." But he must have desired to see something more

of God than this. He knew Him not as the Father, accessible through His Son, by His Spirit. He could, indeed, do what was right in the sight of the Lord ; destroy the worship of idols, restore the altars of God, and trust in Him with all his heart : but he could not render unto God that “ true and laudable service ” revealed to us in Christ ; he could not give that blessing to the holy nation. He soon showed himself a weak man after all ; afraid of death ; parading his treasures before the messengers of the King of Babylon. His wicked son soon undid whatever good he had accomplished.

2. The service of Josiah was even greater than Hezekiah's. He could repair the Temple, cause the word of God to be revered, renew the covenant, destroy idolatry, and keep such a Passover as “ had not been kept since the days of the Judges ; ” but he could not turn the heart of his people to God : he could not bind them to the service of the Lord. It was only putting off the evil day foretold ; for—oh, how sad the words are to read !—“ notwithstanding the Lord turned not from the fierceness of His great wrath, wherewith His anger was kindled against Judah.” Yes ; the bright intervals of those two glorious reigns had but the effect, we may believe, of making the

faithful servants of God more earnestly long for the coming of that true King whose kingdom should be established "with judgment and justice for ever," and pray for the fulfilment of that promise to Abraham alluded to in the Epistle: "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."



*THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER
TRINITY.*

"The good Samaritan."—GOSPEL.

Here, as in a glass, I see
What my Saviour wrought for me :
Love Himself, to faithful view,
Here portrays His service true.

Low as this my nature lay,
Spoilèd, wounded by the way,
Priest and Levite, passing by,
Answer'd not its bitter cry.

Like this good Samaritan,
Love Divine, in perfect man,
Led by mercy, came and sought me,
Bound my wounds, and healing brought me.

Oh! what tongue can half declare
All that Saviour's tender care?
Oh! what work of life can prove
All my mighty debt of love?

He has taught the only way
I that mercy can repay:
Like Himself, to rise above
Every selfish aim, for love;

Like Himself, in sight of woe,
Man, and man alone, to know;
Finding ever life's best joy
While in mercy's sweet employ.



Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity.

THE COLLECT.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, give unto us the increase of faith, hope, and charity; and, that we may obtain that which Thou dost promise, make us to love that which Thou dost command; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE EPISTLE	... ..	<i>Galatians</i> v. 16.
THE GOSPEL	... ..	<i>Luke</i> xvii. 11.
FIRST LESSONS	{ Morning	... <i>Jeremiah</i> v.
	{ Evening	... <i>Jeremiah</i> xxii.

IT cannot be difficult to trace the connexion between the teaching of to-day and that of last Sunday. We considered the blessedness of our condition as partakers of the promise by faith of Jesus Christ, and the privilege of being able to do unto God "true and laudable service" in the hope of finally attaining His heavenly promises. The Collect for to-day reminds us that in order to obtain these pro-

mises, to secure to the end the privileges put within our reach, we must love what God commands ; and, to do this, we must seek an increase of faith, hope, and charity.

These three graces are put together, because their work in the service of God cannot be separated. There can be no true charity—that is, active love—which does not spring out of faith, and grow by hope ; and there can be no life in faith which does not blossom in hope and bear fruit in charity. And yet there may be faith, or rather belief, and even hope, *for a time*, without charity, just as there may be in the trunk of a tree signs of life when the lightning has scathed its branches and death is busy at its roots. How many are there in the Christian Church who still maintain a kind of dead negative belief in the kingdom of Heaven, and occasionally indulge in a dreamy hope of its future joys, but have no love for the life to which that kingdom calls them ? They believe that God lives ; they hope for His promises, but love not what He commands. They would be led by the Spirit to Heaven hereafter, but will not be led by Him to a heavenly life on earth.

I. Against thus miserably deceiving ourselves, how does St. Paul warn us in the

Epistle! We may draw this simple conclusion from his words: if we fulfil the lust of the flesh, if we persist in doing the evil things he afterwards names, we are evidently not "walking in the Spirit;" and if we are not "led by the Spirit" we are still "under the law," and therefore cannot hope to share the promise of God in Christ. "They who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." They may believe in that kingdom; they may have been consigned to its privileges in Baptism; they may have begun to do some of its works; they may cherish bright and transient hopes of its future glories; but they cannot inherit it without the increase of faith, hope, and charity, without "the fruits of the Spirit."

II. See how the Gospel illustrates what has been said as to the possibility of belief and hope without love.

The ten lepers had all faith in Jesus, or they would not have come to Him and cried, "Jesus, Master, have mercy upon us;" they all had hope, or they would not have obeyed the command, "Go, show yourselves unto the priest," which they no doubt thought would be the means of their cleansing: but all had not love, or they would all have returned to give thanks to God at the feet of their merciful Saviour; for thanksgiving is ever the

first-born of love. Thus *their* faith and hope gained their present cleansing : the Samaritan's faith, working by love, made him whole, restored him to health of body and soul.

Is there not here a true description of the case of many in the Christian Church? Faith brings them to Christ to be healed of the leprosy of sin ; hope guides them to use the outward means appointed for their cleansing : but they have not love to follow out a consistent spiritual walk of life, and devote themselves to the service of their Master. They forfeit the inheritance of the kingdom of Heaven by "the works of the flesh."

III. The First Lessons will be found to swell the voice of warning against a state of mind such as has been described. As we read Jeremiah's sad account of the revolted and rebellious people, let us dwell specially upon such verses as these: "Though they say, The Lord liveth ; surely they swear falsely." "They have belied the Lord, and said, It is not He." "Neither say they in their heart, Let us now fear the Lord our God, that giveth rain, both the former and the latter, in his season: He reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest." May we not infer from such expressions as these that there was a certain amount of faith in God lingering amongst the people, and a

certain amount of hope that He would save them? But they had no love for Him, such a love as would have made them hearken to His word and obey His laws. They had "a revolting and rebellious heart."

Is there not something very touching in the opening of the Evening Lesson? It is the last loud call to repentance, the last offer of mercy from a long-suffering God to His rebellious people. Even then, while the cloud of calamity was gathering black over the city, while the Babylonian scourge was uplifted, they might have turned to their true King and have been saved; but they would not. And now, oh, how truly have the words been fulfilled, "Many nations shall pass by this city, and they shall say every man to his neighbour, Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this great city? And they shall answer, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord their God"!

May God in mercy write this warning deep in all our hearts. His covenant is now ours; we are by it pledged to love what He commands. If we forsake it—if we will not hold it fast by faith, hope, and charity—we shall certainly lose what He has promised: we shall bring ourselves to a sadder ruin far than that of His people of old.

*FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER
TRINITY.*

“Give unto us the increase of faith, hope, and charity.”—
THE COLLECT.

We ask for *faith*, to see Thy face,
And feel its light in every place ;
To own through life, whate'er may come,
“So draws true love her children home.”

We ask for *hope*, to trace afar
Our soul's sweet rest from toil and war ;
The glorious fruit, the certain gain,
Of all our sorrow and our pain.

We ask for *love*, the first and best
Of heavenly gifts by man possest,
From every bond to make us free,
And bind our spirits fast to Thee !

We ask for *faith*, love's only root ;
We ask for *love*, faith's only fruit ;
We ask for *hope*, set firm above,
On Thee, O Lord, by faith and love.



Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity.

THE COLLECT.

KEEP, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy Church with Thy perpetual mercy : and, because the frailty of man without Thee cannot but fall, keep us ever by Thy help from all things hurtful, and lead us to all things profitable to our salvation ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE EPISTLE *Galatians* vi. 11.
THE GOSPEL *Matthew* vi. 24.
FIRST LESSONS { Morning ... *Jeremiah* xxxv.
 { Evening ... *Jeremiah* xxxvi.

THERE is no part of our Lord's Sermon on the Mount upon which it is more delightful to dwell than that chosen for to-day's Gospel. How simply and how touchingly does it bring home to us all, even to the little ones, the lesson of perfect trust in a Heavenly Father's love ! And at the same time what deep truths lie hidden beneath its simple words ! It will

be found to contain the substance of all the teaching we have drawn forth from the special services of some Sundays past. "No man can serve two masters. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. *Therefore* I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. . . . But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness."

The plain inference from the whole discourse is this: if we become over-anxious concerning the world and the things of the world, we prove that the world is our master; *it*, and not God, most influences us; therefore it possesses the supreme rule of our lives. We are the servants of that which most rules us; and does not our "taking thought" for mere bodily existence, and for the lot of tomorrow, prove that the world most rules us? If we know that our Heavenly Father is ever near us, and that He has called us into the kingdom of His dear Son, we can surely trust Him for all in the present and the future. He does not call us to fly from the world in which for our probation He has placed us. We must give it all the thought and affection it has a right to claim. He certainly will not work miracles to support us, when, by exer-

cising the endowments He has given us, we can support ourselves. He only requires of us that we "seek first" His kingdom and righteousness; that we make it the first great business of our lives to know Him as our King, to draw nigh unto Him in His Son, and to be continually led by His Holy Spirit.

I. Now if we are indeed thus seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; if we earnestly desire that God alone may rule and guide our lives; if our first thoughts are of Him, and our chief aim is to please Him; if we are hungering and thirsting after a righteous state of mind, and heart, and conduct—a righteousness which will bear the judgment of the Holy and the True—our hearts will find grateful utterance in the words of the Collect for to-day. It is to God's "perpetual mercy," and to that alone, we look to be kept. Every hour we feel our "frailty," and therefore without Him we "cannot but fall" from the kingdom into which He has called us. But we can trust Him, for our great High Priest's sake, to keep us by His help "from all things hurtful, and to lead us to all things profitable to our salvation."

II. The Epistle, and the position it takes in reference to the text of this Sunday's teach-

ing, will be better understood in the light of the first words of the Gospel, "No man can serve two masters." This was precisely what the Judaizers in Galatia, against whom St. Paul wrote, were striving to do. They were willing to accept Christ for their Saviour and King; but would not altogether give up the service of the law of Moses, from which He died to set them free. They sought the kingdom of God, but not His righteousness in Christ; and this because they had not perfect trust in Him. They gloried in the outward rite of circumcision, as that which alone made Christianity "available" for obtaining the kingdom of Heaven. They did not understand the cross of Christ, and that its glory is, that by it the world is crucified to the believer, and the believer unto the world; so that the only thing that "availeth" is the "new creation" into which, through it, man is brought. They who walk "according to this rule," glorying in the cross of Christ alone, because through it they are "crucified to the world," "dead, indeed, unto sin, but alive unto God," are "the Israel of God," and peace is upon them. He will keep them ever with His "perpetual mercy."

III. The First Lessons also must be studied by the light of the Gospel. The great sin of

the Jews was this: they would not "seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness." To bring them to this, God had "sent unto them all His prophets, rising up early and sending them." And even at this time, if they would have acknowledged and turned to their true King, they might have been saved from the calamity and final ruin threatened against them. But they would "go about to establish their own righteousness," setting at nought His kingdom.

Now perhaps there were some who thought to excuse themselves by such a plea as this: "We are creatures of flesh and blood, mightily influenced by the visible things around us; how then can it be expected that we should submit ourselves to the rule of an invisible King? We must see Him to whom we yield ourselves servants to obey." How vain and foolish such a plea was, the example of the sons of Jonadab proved. For they, in obedience to the command of their long-departed father, out of deep reverence for his memory, abstained from wine and dwelt in tents, bearing witness against the luxury of the times. Thus the *mind of the Unseen* could keep *them* obedient. What excuse, then, could there be for a people who had the records of all that the living God had done for them in

the past, and to whom He was continually sending His prophets to bear witness to the reality of His kingdom?

Surely there cannot be found in the Old Testament a sadder picture of the boundless grace of God on the one hand, and the desperate wickedness of man on the other, than is brought before us in the Evening Lesson. "It may be," says the Merciful One, still longing for the salvation of His people, "that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin." And how was the gracious message of God received? The king deliberately burnt the roll of the book of the record of God's judgment. "Yet they were not afraid, nor rent their garments, neither the king nor any of his servants that heard all these words." What was this but a deliberate rejection of the kingdom of God, a declaration that they would neither seek it nor have it?

Oh! when we are getting too much engrossed in the cares and pleasures of this world; when our hearts are growing impatient of the restraints of our Heavenly Father's kingdom; when we are glorying in ourselves and our own works, rather than in the cross

of Christ,—let us recall to mind this scene ; let us see here the end of continued disobedience, and the awful depth to which the frailty of man, without God, can fall !



FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

“Consider the lilies of the field.”—THE GOSPEL.

This is the theme of Nature’s song :
Goodness and love to God belong ;
He worketh right in seeming wrong.
Alleluiah.

The flowers that cheer our common ways,
As from a living censer, raise
Their incense sweet of silent praise.
Alleluiah.

The joyous birds in field and wood,
Whate’er the season’s changeful mood,
Proclaim their witness, “God is good.”
Alleluiah.

All things that bless our passing sight,
If but in faith we read aright,
Foretell the triumph of the light.
Alleluiah.

Our Father hears our feeblest call :
His faithful children ne'er shall fall :
His changeless love surrounds us all.

Alleluiah.

Though earthly scenes grow dark and cold,
A Saviour's hand His saints shall hold :
His praise shall evermore be told.

Alleluiah.

When work is done, and life is past,
Our faith in Him will we hold fast,
And stand in boldness at the last.

Alleluiah.



Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity.

THE COLLECT.

O LORD, we beseech Thee, let Thy continual pity cleanse and defend Thy Church ; and, because it cannot continue in safety without Thy succour, preserve it evermore by Thy help and goodness ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE EPISTLE *Ephesians* iii. 13.

THE GOSPEL *Luke* vii. 11.

FIRST LESSONS { Morning ... *Ezekiel* ii.
 { Evening ... *Ezekiel* xiii.

THE Collect for to-day is in spirit the same as that for last Sunday. The very utterance of the words becomes a confession at once of our own helplessness, and of our entire dependence upon the mercy and goodness of God ; and out of this confession flows comfort : for, if the Church can only be cleansed and defended by God's continual pity, we know that that pity is ours in Christ when we

faithfully seek it. If we cannot continue in safety without God's succour, we know that that succour will be given us through the Spirit, when we need it.

I. This humbling but consoling teaching speaks out from the Epistle. St. Paul's prayers are ever his deepest and fullest discourses ; and this for the Ephesians will be found to set forth all that Christ's people can need, or pray for, or hope for. What more can we desire than that "Christ may dwell in (our) hearts by faith," and that we may "know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge"? If we love Him, and experience His love, we know that God "is able to do abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us:" not our own power, for of ourselves we are most helpless ; but His power by the Spirit.

II. The place of the Gospel seems to be this : to give us the very best assurance that the "continual pity" of the Lord defends His Church ; and to describe how He preserves us by His goodness. He who met that funeral procession at the gate of Nain, compassionated the widow's desolation of spirit, hushed her grief with His mighty "Weep not," and gave her back her son—He, the same, though unseen, is ever near *us*, ready to comfort and

to help us when we turn to Him. He sympathizes, as the true Son of man, with all our sorrows. He is able, as the true Son of God, "to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." He is "the Resurrection and the Life," ready to revive our dead affections, and hopes, and energies. But let us especially observe the *effect* of this miracle at Nain upon the multitude of the Jewish people. We are told, "There came a great fear on all." They were awe-struck at this proof of a Divine power working around them, and so near them. "And they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited His people." But they saw no more than "a great prophet," like Elijah or Ezekiel: the real end of the miracle had not come to them: they could not see that what Christ had done was, not to attract their wonder, but to win their faith; to make them own that their Life was calling them to Himself; to make them submit themselves to One who could both have compassion upon them and save them. God had, indeed, "visited His people," as they said, but not as in the days of the old prophets. He was speaking unto them by His Son: He was come to dwell in faithful souls for ever.

III. And here our minds cannot but be recalled to the First Lessons.

1. God says, when He commissions Ezekiel to his great and difficult work, "They, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them." They could not but know this as time went on. Doubtless they often made the same confession as their descendants in the Gospel, "A great prophet is risen up;" but they would not see what kind of a prophet Ezekiel was, and what was the Divine purpose in raising him up. His very name, "God will strengthen," was a sign to them. His prophecy was not the utterance of a doom of death, but a call to life. That vision of the valley of the dry bones signified what God's "continual pity" was ready to do for His people, if they would but faithfully turn to Him; even as the miracle at Nain signified what Christ was ready to become to the whole nation, and to all the human race, then. But, alas! they would not come unto Him that they might have life; they would not have Him to reign over them. Ezekiel was only as one who spoke parables: his "tribulations for them," which, like St. Paul's for the Ephesians, were their "glory," inasmuch as they were signs

of God's will concerning them, were all in vain.

2. This Evening's Lesson shows us the worst symptom of their coming ruin. They listened to "the foolish prophets" that prophesied "out of their own hearts," seeing "peace for Jerusalem," when there was no peace. For what peace could there be until they surrendered themselves to their true King, and made "Ezekiel,—God shall help!"—their watch-word? Oh, let this be our watch-word too—"God will help!" For have we not confessed in the Collect that we "cannot continue in safety without" God's "succour"? And "if God be with us, who can be against us?"



SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

"I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you."—
THE EPISTLE, THE GOSPEL, THE COLLECT.

O thou dread mysterious Pain!
 Who thy coming can explain?
 Who can know thine end?
 Sparing oft the sinner proud;
 Striking from the godless crowd
 Virtue's dearest friend.

While in sad estate he lies,
"Where is now," the tempter cries,
"All a Father's care?"
Comes not Christ to help His own?
Hears He that repeated moan,
And that earnest prayer?

Yes; a Father's watchful care
Still His stricken children share;
Learning, in their loss,
If His wisdom could employ,
In their cleansing, only joy,
He would spare the cross.

Let the mourner, desolate,
Think how once, at Nain's gate,
Jesus came to bless.
Still that mighty "Weep not" comes,
Breathing through our darken'd homes
Comfort in distress.

Now will sorrow, pain, and loss,
Held before a Saviour's cross,
Glow with brightest love.
Many a fall and sad surprise
Will but help the soul to rise
To its home above.



Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity.

THE COLLECT.

LORD, we pray Thee that Thy grace may always prevent and follow us, and make us continually to be given to all good works ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE EPISTLE *Ephesians* iv. 1.
THE GOSPEL *Luke* xiv. 1.
FIRST LESSONS { Morning ... *Ezekiel* xiv.
 { Evening ... *Ezekiel* xviii.

THE Collect we offer up to-day pledges us each one to this twofold confession: we cannot be continually given to all good works unless God's grace always prevents and follows us; and if God's grace is thus granted us, it is that we may be "continually given to all good works." There is, of course, one other plain inference: that no man who is given to evil works, or, indeed, to any evil work, can hope for God's grace. The best

evidence—nay, the only evidence—we can have that “the grace of God, which bringeth salvation,” has appeared to us, is by manifesting the fruits of grace in our common life.

I. To this St. Paul affectionately exhorts the Ephesians, and all Christians, in the Epistle. We have a high and holy vocation. The Name of Christ is upon us : we have been baptized in the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. We must “walk worthy” of that vocation. Men must see that we know and revere the Name we bear ; and they must be won by our good works, wrought through faith in that Name, to glorify our Father which is in Heaven. Can we bear the Name of Jesus, and spend our days in self-indulgence, and scheming for the world’s high places? Can we bear the Name of Jesus, and be proud of heart, envious of others, unforgiving of wrong? Can we bear the Name of Jesus, and make no endeavours, as members of one body, “to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”?

II. The Gospel seems appointed to show us what is meant by God’s grace always preventing and following us, and by our being “continually given to all good works.”

Our blessed Lord, “in the house of one of the chief Pharisees, on the Sabbath day,”

although He knew that "they watched Him," did not shrink from breaking through all their prejudices to perform the good work of healing a man that had the dropsy. So, if by the grace of God we are "given to good works," we shall embrace every opportunity of doing what we certainly know to be such; we shall not heed the hard judgment of the world; we shall not for a moment consult our own convenience and pleasure.

And whenever we are called into the society of our fellow-men, if God's grace goes before us, we shall not choose "the highest rooms;" we shall humble ourselves, that we may be exalted in our true character before God. Lowliness and meekness, long-suffering and forbearance, unity and peace, are good works continually in the reach of the poorest and simplest; and they are the choicest fruits of the Spirit of grace.

III. Let us now see what the First Lessons teach us in connection with what has been said.

I. From the Morning Lesson we learn these two things. First, no man who separates himself from God, sets up his idols in his heart, and puts the stumbling-block of his iniquity before his face; or, to put it in another form, no man who is not "given to

good works" can hope to be received by the grace of God. The mere coming to Him will not save us; but the spirit in which we come.

Secondly, no man who is not himself "given to good works" can hope to derive benefit from the righteousness of others, even though as Noah, Daniel, and Job. "No man may deliver his brother, nor make agreement unto God for him."

2. From the Evening Lesson we may learn this. No man shall be lost, or suffer for the sins of others, if he himself has turned away from his own wickedness, and seeks by God's grace to do that which is lawful and right. Iniquity shall be no man's ruin who truly repents of all his transgressions, and gives himself to live unto God in His Son, by His Spirit. Oh, how unspeakably kind and touching is the appeal of the Lord to His people! "Make you a new heart, and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye."



*SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER
TRINITY.*

“Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.”

THE EPISTLE.

Compare the COLLECT, GOSPEL, FIRST LESSONS.

Father ! if that dearest name
Sinful child may dare to claim,
Let it from my life remove
All that hinders growth of love.
Pride has linger'd far too long ;
Love of pleasure still is strong :
Holy Father ! now, I pray,
Take these idols all away.

Jesus ! if my sinful tongue
Thee may sing, as once it sung,
Let Thy Name, like rising day,
Pride and malice melt away.
Prince of Peace ! our hidden Life,
Quench the fire of party strife ;
From Thy Church, O keep afar
Worldly lust, the root of war.

Come, O gracious Spirit, come ;
Make our hearts Thy worthy home :
Then shall peace in glory reign ;
Then shall truth the world regain ;
Then shall Christ His Church behold
Knit together as of old,
Striving only who can prove
First and best in deeds of love !

Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity.

THE COLLECT.

LORD, we beseech Thee, grant Thy people grace to withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and with pure hearts and minds to follow Thee the only God ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE EPISTLE	... ..	I <i>Corinthians</i> i. 4.
THE GOSPEL	... ..	<i>Matthew</i> xxii. 34.
FIRST LESSONS	{ Morning	... <i>Ezekiel</i> xx.
	{ Evening	... <i>Ezekiel</i> xxiv.

I. LET us see all that is implied in the Collect. The object of the Christian's life is to "follow God," that is, to be led by His Spirit and to imitate His character as declared in Christ. But God can only thus be followed with a pure heart and mind. He will not be "inquired of" by men who come to Him "with their idols in their heart," and "the stumbling-block of their iniquity before their face." To

preserve our hearts and minds thus pure we must "withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil;" and this we can only do through the grace of God. We prove that we truly know God by heartily loving Him; we prove that we heartily love Him by sincerely following Him; and we prove that we are sincerely following Him by earnestly striving against the three spiritual foes we once in His Name renounced.

II. Let us next see what is implied in the opening words of St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians, appointed for the Epistle.

He thanks God on their behalf, for the grace of God which is given them by Jesus Christ—that grace for which we pray in the Collect—that in every thing they "are enriched by Him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge." He is speaking, of course, of the Church generally—of the whole body of believers in Corinth. Doubtless there were many particular members on whose behalf he could not thus thank God. But, as a Church, he was able to encourage them by the expression of his thankfulness that the Gospel of Christ had been so ably preached and so well received amongst them. Their lives generally proved that they were, with pure hearts and minds, following the only God,

“waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” They loved Him whom they knew, and they followed Him whom they loved.

III. Our blessed Lord’s words in the Gospel will bring our minds round to what was said upon the Collect.

To the question of the Lawyer,—not asked with pure heart and mind, but “tempting Him” to give utterance to an unpopular opinion,—Jesus answered, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.” To bring them to this, and to the fulfilment of that other great commandment, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,” had been God’s object in all the precepts of His law, and in all the deeper teaching of His prophets. But weak human nature had not been able to withstand the temptation of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Man, by himself, could not obey the perfect law of God ; therefore he could not “know the Lord.” Hence, in that question to the Pharisees, “What think ye of Christ? whose Son is He?” our Lord’s design appears to have been to bring home to the minds of those who heard Him that He was the Lord of whom David spake in the Psalm; and that, by acknowledging Him, and obeying His word, they could alone

triumph over all the enemies of their souls, and "with pure hearts and minds follow the only God."

IV. As we read the First Lessons we shall be struck by the continual recurrence of the words, "Ye shall know that I am the Lord." These words will at once connect them with the rest of the services.

What an affecting history is contained in this Morning's Lesson of all God's dealings with His people from the day when He first "chose Israel," and made Himself "known unto them in the land of Egypt." Every succeeding generation is subjected by unwearied love to the same kind of probation: each in turn exhibits the same spirit of ingratitude and rebellion—that spirit of rebellion coming to a head in the reckless resolve, "We will be as the heathen, as the families of the countries, to serve wood and stone." And what was the meaning and end of all He had done for them, all that had come to pass, and was coming to pass, upon them? It is declared in those repeated words, "Ye shall know that I am the Lord." The very destruction of their city and temple, the last and sorest of all His judgments, was really the stroke of a hand of mercy: it was to make them know the Lord, their true King.

Oh, how full of love unspeakable are those words at the close of the Morning Lesson: "Ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have wrought with you for My Name's sake, not according to your wicked ways, nor according to your corrupt doings, saith the Lord God." They tell the remnant of God's ancient people, in whatever country, under whatever circumstances of life, that not fresh visitations of wrath, not His mighty hand and stretched-out arm, and fury poured out, will bring them at last to know, to love, and to follow their true King: but a humbling conviction of their own sins, and an irresistible sense of His mercy. And where shall this conviction of sin, and this sense of infinite mercy, be learned? Only where *we* have learnt them, where every man must seek to learn them—beneath the cross of Christ. How shall they know God, so as to love Him with all their heart, and soul, and strength, but as *we* know Him, and have been drawn to follow Him—even in His new Name of Father, spoken out by His only begotten Son?



*EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER
TRINITY.*

“And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have wrought with you for My Name’s sake, not according to your wicked ways, nor according to your corrupt doings, O ye house of Israel.”—FIRST LESSON.

See also the COLLECT, EPISTLE, and GOSPEL.

Father of all ! foreshadow’d here we trace
Thy blessed kingdom of eternal grace ;
So hast Thou wrought, and so art working still,
To win rebellious hearts to love Thy wiser will.

Firm as the sun, Thy mercy, ever bright,
Displays its glory in our self-made night :
We learn Thy truth in sorrow and in shame,
And only know beneath the cross our Father’s
Name.

Strong is the world our souls to draw away ;
Strong is the flesh our glowing faith to slay ;
And strong, alas ! through both, our subtle foe :
But, leaning on Thine arm, securely we may go.

O let that arm support us to the last,
And, though we madly struggle, hold us fast ;
This is our hope, e’en to our latest breath,
A Father’s love revealed in a Saviour’s death.



Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity.

THE COLLECT.

O GOD, forasmuch as without Thee we are not able to please Thee; Mercifully grant, that Thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE EPISTLE *Ephesians* iv. 17.
 THE GOSPEL *Matthew* ix. 1.
 FIRST LESSONS { Morning ... *Daniel* iii.
 { Evening ... *Daniel* vi.

THE teaching of the last two Sundays naturally draws forth the prayer of the Collect for to-day. We prayed that God's grace would "make us continually to be given to all good works." Then we sought "grace to withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil;" because the more heartily we devote ourselves to do what is good, the more earnestly we shall have to struggle against evil. But how can we think,

without God, either to resist evil, or to do good, so as to please Him? Must we not, therefore, pray that His "Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts"? Nor let us overlook the peculiar force of the two words here used. God's Holy Spirit must *direct* our hearts, else they cannot keep their right *way*—"following God." God's Holy Spirit must *rule* our hearts, or they cannot maintain their right *character*—"continually given to all good works."

I. The Epistle will be found to consist of two divisions.

The first part describes the condition of those who are not under the direction and rule of God's Holy Spirit. Such men walk "in the vanity of their mind; having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." They may be very learned in the things of man, but without the Spirit they must be ignorant of the things of God. Their hearts may be full of bright hopes and beautiful feelings, but they are blind, with all these, without the Spirit.

The second part describes the state of those who have "learned Christ," and are "renewed in the spirit of their mind." Truthfulness

and honesty, temperance and meekness, purity and kindness—these are the characteristics of “the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” On the other hand, lying and dishonesty, “bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking,” will assuredly grieve the “Holy Spirit of God, whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption.”

II. The Gospel illustrates the first part of the Collect—without God we are not able to please Him. Our state by nature is represented in that poor paralytic of whom we read. We are paralyzed, as it were, by sin. We cannot even find access to the Father but through the Son by the Spirit. The Great Absolver’s voice must say unto us, “Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.” Only when our hearts have been set free from the service of sin can they be directed and ruled by the Holy Spirit in the service of God.

III. In the First Lessons we have noble examples of men whose hearts were in all things directed and ruled by God’s Holy Spirit.

We are told of Daniel, in the Evening Lesson, that “an excellent spirit was in him.” His whole life manifested a spirit of holy resolution, of uncorrupted purity, and of

earnest consistent piety ; and this because he trusted in God, and gave himself wholly to be taught and governed by Him. This “excellent spirit”—the Spirit of God within him—enabled him to maintain his resolution that he would not defile himself by eating forbidden meats in the king’s house. This gave him wisdom to interpret the king’s visions ; this emboldened him to pray unto the Lord his God, notwithstanding the impious decree of King Darius ; this preserved him in the hour of danger.

And what “an excellent spirit” was also shown by Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in their reply to King Nebuchadnezzar. “Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace ; and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But, *if not*, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.” Was not this the answer of men under the constant guidance and rule of the Spirit of the Living God ? And, oh ! how should this “excellent spirit” of theirs put to shame the half-heartedness, the cowardly self-seeking, and the weariness in well-doing of many of us who claim the indwelling of the Spirit of the Father in the kingdom of His Son !

*NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER
TRINITY.*

FIRST LESSONS, COLLECT, EPISTLE, GOSPEL.

God is King ! a sure salvation,
When to Him for help we call ;
Through the fire of tribulation
He will safely lead us all :
God is King ; on Him depending,
Faithful souls can never fall.

Jesus reigns : our nature wearing,
Now the heavenly veil within,
All our human feelings sharing,
While He pleads for human sin :
Jesus reigns ; for souls repentant
He will peace and glory win.

God is King : in love providing
Strength and light for every day,
Shielding lowly souls, and guiding
Through the foes that line their way :
God is King ; His Holy Spirit
Will not fail us when we pray.

Heavenly King, while all creation
Sings aloud Thy power and love,
We our strains of adoration
Blend with heavenly choirs above :
More and more Thy great salvation
Shall our hearts to praises move.

Twentieth Sunday after Trinity.

THE COLLECT.

O ALMIGHTY and most merciful God, of Thy bountiful goodness keep us, we beseech Thee, from all things that may hurt us; that we, being ready both in body and soul, may cheerfully accomplish those things that Thou wouldest have done; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE EPISTLE *Ephesians* v. 15.

THE GOSPEL *Matthew* xxii. 1.

FIRST LESSONS { Morning ... *Joel* ii.
 { Evening ... *Micah* vi.

THE reason why men fail to please God is because their hearts are not in all things directed and ruled by His Holy Spirit; and this is because they are not ready, both in body and soul, cheerfully to accomplish those things which He would have done. We see, then, how the teaching of this week, which is implied in the petition of the Collect, connects itself with that of last Sunday.

I. Looking to the Epistle, the whole teaching of the day is expressed in these words, "Be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." It is through lack of spiritual wisdom ; through inconsideration of mind, and unreadiness of heart ; through not understanding, because they do not care to understand, what the will of the Lord is, that so many fail of the grace of God. They "walk as fools" through life. They do not think *what* they are and *whose* they are ; they do not heed whither they are tending and how they go. If "the days are evil" on account of the evil spirits above us, the evil world around us, and the evil nature within us ; if our spiritual foes are so many, and their temptation so mighty, this is only the more reason why we should redeem—buy up, make every sacrifice to gain—our time of serving our true King. But, alas ! too many let their golden opportunities slip by with no efforts to use them.

II. The parable of the bidden guests, in the Gospel, is certainly the very best commentary upon the words of St. Paul in the Epistle. When the king sent forth to call to the marriage feast of his son those who had been invited, we read that "they made light of it, and went their ways." Yes, "they made light of it ;" this was the cause of their in-

gratitude ; this led them so grievously to offend their king, and brought upon them his wrath. They were “unwise ;” they did not think *who* had called them, and what might be the consequences of displeasing him. They did not duly estimate the honour he had done them in calling them, and the blessing to which he called them. Therefore, lacking wisdom to understand the will of their lord, they dishonoured and displeased him.

Again, when, in the place of the first-bidden, the guests had been gathered from the highways, and the king saw the man without a wedding garment, what excited his wrath? What made the man speechless for want of excuse, and brought upon him shame and punishment? Was it not the same “unwise” state of mind of which we have spoken? He had not cared to understand the will of the king. He came in with the crowd of guests, but he did not trouble himself to inquire whither he was going, and to whose feast. He did not think it necessary to ask what the king “would have done”—what were the rules of admission to his palace, and the requirements of his guests. He might no doubt have been supplied with a marriage garment for the asking ; but he had not thought about it, or the consequences of negligence. Therefore,

when the question came, "How camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment?" he was speechless. His conscience told him that he had no excuse. He had simply neglected the king's will because he had no real reverence for his authority. Oh how truly does this describe the conduct of too many in the Christian Church, especially with respect to the Holy Communion! They miss the blessings of the feast of heavenly love, and bring upon themselves the displeasure of Him who invites them to come to it, because they "make light" of His call. Or, they come unprepared into His presence, and bring upon themselves exclusion into the "outer darkness," because they despise "the marriage garment" required by Him in Holy Scripture, even the righteousness of His Son.

III. And here, by the light of this parable, is surely the place to study the First Lessons.

Let us ask why it was that God had sent those fearful judgments upon His people, of which we read this morning; why the locust, the cankerworm, the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, His great army, desolated the land. It was because His people had "made light of" the message of their King, repeated by many a prophet, calling them to repentance. They had walked "as fools," not

“as wise.” They would not understand the Lord’s will ; therefore He sent among them those terrible signs of the nearness of the kingdom they despised. He uttered His voice before His army, to bring His people to wisdom, and draw their hearts to Himself.

And that beautiful chapter of Micah, chosen for the Evening Lesson, reveals to us the same mind of God. His “controversy with His people” was the same as it had ever been, the same as it will be to the end : to bring them to own the power and glory of His kingdom, and, with readiness of body and soul, cheerfully to accomplish those things which He will have done. What “those things” are He tells us in the chapter. “He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good ; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?”



*TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER
TRINITY.*

THE GOSPEL, "The Marriage Feast;" THE EPISTLE,
"See that ye walk—not as fools," &c.; THE COLLECT;
FIRST MORNING LESSON.

Come to the feast ! your King obey ;
Come to the feast ! your Saviour find ;
All vain excuses cast away,
And leave your worldly cares behind.
Come to the feast ! but oh, beware !
The King Himself will judge you there :
One robe alone His guest must wear.

Still, Lord, Thy servants call in vain :
Men walk as fools, and dream they live ;
Thy richest banquet they disdain,
And take the husks the world can give ;
Seeming to live, they love to die,
Though angels ever pass them by,
With bread of immortality.

O God of wisdom ! make us wise,
To know Thy will, and love it best ;
To count Thy blessing all our prize,
And find Thy service sweetest rest :
Then faith and love again shall win
All that we lost in days of sin,
And heavenly peace on earth begin.



Twenty-first Sunday after Trinity.

THE COLLECT.

GRANT, we beseech Thee, merciful Lord, to Thy faithful people pardon and peace, that they may be cleansed from all their sins, and serve Thee with a quiet mind ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE EPISTLE	... ..	<i>Ephesians</i> vi. 10.
THE GOSPEL	.. ...	<i>John</i> iv. 46.
FIRST LESSONS	{ Morning	... <i>Habakkuk</i> ii.
	{ Evening	... <i>Proverbs</i> i.

LET us to-day first turn our attention to that part of the services which gives least promise of harmonizing with the rest : the First Evening Lesson. There, in those words of wisdom, we hear the Spirit of God speaking for the guidance of His Church at all times : "Whoso hearkeneth unto Me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil." Does He not here promise us just what we

pray for in the Collect? He bids us know that salvation and rest, the two great blessings we all crave, depend upon hearkening to Him, hearing His word, submitting to His kingdom, receiving His righteousness, and studying to do His will. We cannot "dwell safely" unless we look to a Divine Saviour, and we cannot be "quiet from fear of evil" unless we are living by faith in Him.

II. The same is taught us by the Collect. We pray for "pardon and peace;" not peace before pardon, for that could be no true peace; but peace flowing from the knowledge of salvation. Again, we pray that we "may be cleansed from all (our) sins, and serve (God) with a quiet mind." Herein we imply that the great enemies of peace are our sins; we must therefore, by God's mercy, be delivered from these before we can hope to render unto God the calm and blessed service of His faithful people. Indeed, we may say that the object of all the services for to-day is to bring us to own and seek this great blessing of serving God with a quiet mind.

III. Looking to the Morning Lesson, was not this what God was teaching the prophet Habakkuk, that he might teach it to his countrymen? The prophet's mind had been greatly disquieted by the wonderful events

which had happened in his time, by the state of the holy nation, and by the character of the heathen whom God had raised up to be His instruments of correction. As he stands "upon his watch," to learn what God would say unto him in answer to his complaints, he is bidden to "write the vision, and make it plain upon tables," and then to wait for its accomplishment, though it should tarry. He is told that "the just shall live by his faith;" trusting in the justice and goodness of God in all things. Therefore he can find peace in that one reflection—the conclusion of his triumphant faith—"The Lord is in His holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before Him." Darker even yet might be the aspect of things around him; greater sorrows and sufferings for himself and his countrymen might be coming; but, knowing that the living God, full of mercy and truth, was still in the midst of His people, and that all things were surely accomplishing His work, he could serve God with a quiet mind.

IV. Look at the Gospel in its bearing upon what has been said. Is not the state of many souls represented in the sickness of that nobleman's son at Capernaum? Instead of serving God with a quiet mind, they are in a fever of anxiety and trouble, of fear and sorrow: they

hardly dare think of the past; they are dissatisfied with the present; they dread the future. And for this simple reason: they are not really living by faith, but their souls are lifted up in them. They are waiting for "signs and wonders"—extraordinary proofs of their Saviour's presence—before they believe. Oh, if we could but fully trust Him, and believe in His word, as this nobleman in the Gospel did, the fever would leave our souls! Or, to express the same truth in the words of this Evening's Lesson, if we would but hearken unto the voice of heavenly wisdom, we should "dwell safely," and be "quiet from fear of evil."

V. The Epistle occupies a most important place in the teaching of the day. We must not be content to "dwell safely," and to be "quiet from fear of evil:" this would be indeed but an inglorious peace. Ours must be the peace of active service in the cause of our God. We are still, like Habakkuk, standing upon our watch, and set upon the tower, with the opposing forces of the world and of the devil all around us, while the vision of the glorious King yet tarries for the appointed time. We must, therefore, "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might;" we must take unto us "the whole armour of God," that we "may be able to withstand in the evil

day," and, "having done all, to stand." We must be "praying always, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit." This is the true life of the faithful soul: this is salvation and peace.



*TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER
TRINITY.*

FIRST MORNING LESSON, Habakkuk; EPISTLE; GOSPEL;
COLLECT, "Serve Thee with a quiet mind."

"God is in His holy temple"!—
Here His faithful servants find
Perfect rest in heart and mind;
Reading love in all they see;
Trusting love for all to be.

"God is in His holy temple"!—
What though sinners rich and strong
Glory in triumphant wrong?
Worldly tyrants soon shall fall:
Wisest love is ruling all!

"God is in His holy temple"!—
Fear no more the mighty foe
Near us when we cannot know:
Stronger far than shield or sword
Faith will find Jehovah's word.

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“God is in His holy temple”!—
Now no more can care and gloom,
Like a fever, souls consume :
God Himself descends to give
Life restored, and strength to live !



Twenty-second Sunday after Trinity.

THE COLLECT.

LORD, we beseech Thee to keep Thy household the Church in continual godliness; that through Thy protection it may be free from all adversities, and devoutly given to serve Thee in good works, to the glory of Thy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE EPISTLE	... ..	<i>Philippians</i> i. 3.
THE GOSPEL	... ..	<i>Matthew</i> xviii. 21.
FIRST LESSONS	{ Morning	... <i>Proverbs</i> ii.
	{ Evening	... <i>Proverbs</i> iii.

WE may easily derive from the Collect the lesson for our learning to-day. We pray that God will “keep (His) household the Church in continual godliness.” Now there is a godliness—or rather a pretended godliness—which affects the mind and the feelings, but lays not hold of the life; which shoots forth occasional flashes of goodness, but pro-

duces no fruits of righteousness; which leads men to receive the grace of God, but not to walk as children of grace; which makes them desire, through God's protection, to be free from all adversities, but not to be "devoutly given" to all good works. Such a vain shadow of godliness will avail no man. True godliness is continual, consistent, and active. We have not received the blessings of the Gospel for our own comfort and well-being alone. "If God *so* loved us, we ought also to love one another." If He protects us by His power from all things that may hurt us, it is that we may be the more devoted to His service. What He has done for us is to be the standard of what He requires of us.

I. Do not St. Paul's words in the Epistle call us to such reflections as these?

He thanks God, he says, "upon every remembrance" of the Philippian Church. When he prays for them, which he is continually doing, it is "always with joy." And what was it which gave him such comfort when he thought of them? It was, he says, their "fellowship in the Gospel from the first day until now." In other words, it was that God had kept His "household the Church in *continual* godliness." They had been steady and consistent. And he prays that their "love

may abound"—that is, may grow and gather strength and bear fruit—"more and more;" that they "may approve things that are excellent," and that they "may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ." Then let it be observed how his prayer for them concludes: "Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God." Do not these words answer to those of the Collect, "Devoutly given to serve Thee in good works, to the glory of Thy Name"? In one sense, indeed, we *are* filled with the fruits of Christ's righteousness, in respect of our justification. In another sense we must pray to be filled with the fruits of Christ's righteousness, in respect of our sanctification. We must pray God to enable us to prove our faith by our works. We must give evidence to the world that we are Christ's, by being led by His Spirit, and by exhibiting His character of holiness and love.

II. And here let us study the striking and solemn warning afforded us in the Gospel.

How little was that servant in the parable benefited by all his master's compassion towards him! It did not soften his heart: it did not make him more ready to sympathize with his fellow-servants. It did not move

him to show his gratitude to his master by following his noble example. Therefore he was so severely dealt with afterwards; because he had received from grace so much, and yet could appreciate that grace so little. And may not God justly say to us what was said to this man: "Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?" He has shown His compassion upon us by forgiving us, for His Son's sake, all our vast debt of sin; by sending His Holy Spirit, the Comforter, to sanctify us and guide us unto all truth. He has set before us the highest aims and the noblest example. Every day and every hour is full of the witnesses of His compassion. And why has He done all this? Is it that we may simply receive His benefits, sitting still and adoring Him? Is it that we may admire the lofty goodness we do not care to imitate? No: it is that we may "approve things that are excellent;" that our "love may abound yet more and more" by the motive and example of His; that we may show our compassion for our fellow-servants as He has had pity upon us; that we may be continually given to all "good works, to the glory of (*His*) Name," because He has done so much for us.

III. As we read the First Lessons we

shall be reminded again and again of the teaching of the other parts of the services.

Defining Wisdom, of which mention is so often made, to be *the best knowledge, acquired by the best means, and devoted to the best ends*, we may substitute for it the word *godliness*, which, we have said, means the *devotion of the mind, the heart, and the life, to God*.

1. First, then, we learn, how this wisdom, or godliness, makes men under God's protection "free from all adversities." "When wisdom entereth into thine heart, . . . discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee: to deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward things; who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness: . . . to deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words; which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God."

2. Secondly, we learn how wisdom makes us "devoutly given to serve (God) in good works." "Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: so shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man. . . . Trust in the

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Lord with all thine heart ; and lean not unto thine own understanding. . . . Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase. . . . Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it." Indeed, the whole of the Evening Lesson is but an exhortation to "continual godliness," to devote our whole hearts and lives to God.



*TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER
TRINITY.*

"Shouldest thou not also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant?"—THE GOSPEL.

"Devoutly given to serve Thee in good works."—THE COLLECT.

Vast was thy debt, O man, and swelling every day :
A life of hardest service could but little pay ;
And still His perfect law God callèd to obey.

That debt is wholly paid : a Saviour intercedes ;
The Son of God Himself in human nature pleads,
And sends His Spirit to supply thy largest needs.

Go forth, redeemed soul, and sing that Saviour's
praise ;

Devoutly give to Him the remnant of thy days ;
Bear witness to His wondrous love in all thy ways :

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And when thy fellow sues for pity or for aid,
Look deep within, and know whereof thyself art
made,
And what if God requirèd all His debt unpaid.

Oh judge thy brother's sin as God is judging thine !
His feeble efforts measure by the rule Divine ;
And only by the Cross interpret each design.



Twenty-third Sunday after Trinity.

THE COLLECT.

O GOD, our refuge and strength, who art the Author of all godliness ; Be ready, we beseech Thee, to hear the devout prayers of Thy Church ; and grant that those things which we ask faithfully we may obtain effectually ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE EPISTLE *Philippians* iii. 17.

THE GOSPEL *Matthew* xxii. 15.

FIRST LESSONS { Morning ... *Proverbs* xi.
 { Evening ... *Proverbs* xii.

LET us call to mind what was the distinctive teaching of last Sunday, in order that we may connect it with that for to-day.

We were taught that nothing will avail a man but "continual godliness ;" a consistent devotion of mind and heart and life to God, to know, to love, and to do His will. We learn to-day that God is the Author of all such

godliness ; and we can only obtain it by turning for refuge and for strength to Him.

We were taught that if God makes us free from all adversities—from our sins, and all their consequences, which are against the life of our souls—it is that we may be devoutly given to serve Him in good works, to the glory of His Name. We learn to-day that, before we can be this, we must give ourselves to God in faithful prayer. Our whole hearts must be within the kingdom of Heaven, before we can do its works and hope to share its glories.

I. It is the evident design of the Gospel to teach us this.

The Pharisees thought to entangle the Lord in His talk, by sending out their disciples with the Herodians to ask, "Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?" There seemed no escape from the dilemma designed by this question. For to have said, "It is lawful," would have been to oppose Himself at once to the fanatical Pharisees, and help their malicious scheming to weaken His influence with the common people. To have said, "It is not lawful," would have offended the Romanizing Herodians, and afforded them the ground of a charge against Him that He was stirring up the people against Cæsar. How full of

heavenly wisdom is the Lord's reply: "Show Me the tribute money. Whose is this image and superscription? . . . Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's." His words implied as much as this: "You do not deny that Cæsar's image and superscription upon your current coinage is a sign that you are under Cæsar's sway. How far this is a right or wrong state for the chosen people of God, is another question. You must take the consequences of the condition to which you have brought yourselves. Cæsar has evident claims upon you for some proof of service: render unto him his dues. 'And unto God the things that are God's.' Are ye not as men made in the image of God? Is not His Name upon you? Is not circumcision a sign that you are His? Is not the Law, of which you make your boast, the badge of His service? Render unto God His own. Give yourselves to your true King. Yield yourselves to Him, whose you were, as a nation, long before Rome had a king. And this if you will do—if you will own that the Lord is your King; if you will come unto Him by Me, and be ruled by His Spirit—you shall be delivered from the outward tyranny of the Cæsars; you shall receive a kingdom which cannot be

moved; you shall become citizens of a heavenly state wherein none can trouble you."

II. In the Epistle we find St. Paul claiming for himself, and for all who had given themselves to God in Christ, this heavenly citizenship, as the ground of present comfort and hope for the future: "Our conversation," or citizenship (for that is the right translation of the word), "is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." The sin of these corrupt Philippians, whose example was so dangerous to the Christian converts, was all expressed in these words: "Who mind earthly things." Their thoughts of themselves, and of the world in which they lived, were altogether earthly. They acknowledged no kingdom of God claiming the allegiance of their spirits. They walked by sight. On the other hand, the true believers, while they cheerfully rendered unto the world all its dues, lived as citizens of heaven. They set their affections on things above. Their first and best thoughts were of their everlasting home. They lived and worked as ever in the presence of their unseen King. They looked for His coming to glorify His Church for ever. And so it must be with us. We are "fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." Oh, let us realize what we are!

Let us magnify our privileges. Let us, by faithful prayer, keep our hearts ever near our Heavenly King. It is wonderful how easy we shall find it to answer all questions concerning what we owe to the world, if we "seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness."

III. The First Lessons for these last Sundays after Trinity have not the same bearing upon the teaching of the day as we have seen heretofore; nevertheless, they still have their place, and we shall perceive that they have been most wisely chosen. How many of the proverbs read to us both this morning and evening are strikingly illustrated in the services we have already considered!

When we read in the Gospel of the hypocritical Pharisees and Herodians tempting Christ with the question, "Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not?" that they might entangle Him in His talk, do we not recall such proverbs as these: "An hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbour: but through knowledge shall the just be delivered. . . . The thoughts of the righteous are right: but the counsels of the wicked are deceit. . . . The wicked is snared by the transgression of his lips: but the just shall come out of trouble. . . . Deceit is

in the heart of them that imagine evil : but to the counsellors of peace is joy" ?

Again, do not several of those proverbs impress upon us the truth of the Collect, that God is "the Author of all godliness" ?

Again, considering our Lord's words in the Gospel to mean, that to give ourselves wholly to God is the best means of learning how to do our duty to the world, is not *this* truth more than once set before us in the Proverbs ?

Oh, let us faithfully ask of God to keep us in "continual godliness ;" let us have our citizenship in heaven ; let us keep our hearts fixed upon our invisible King : then shall we give to the world all that it has a right to claim of us, and know how to enjoy or to reject what it is able to offer us. "By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted." "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life ; and he that winneth souls is wise."



*TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER
TRINITY.*

“Our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven.”—THE
EPISTLE.

“Render unto God the things that are God’s.”—THE
GOSPEL.

“God our refuge and strength.”—THE COLLECT.

Fast the wither’d leaves are falling,
O’er the frozen flowers beneath :
Thousand forms of beauty faded
Tell thy triumph, mighty Death !

We, like trees, but briefly flourish :
Like the leaves we all decay ;
Freezing cares, as life advances,
Bear our brightest hopes away.

Lift thy careful heart, O Christian,
Upward to thy Heavenly King :
Out of all these seeming evils
Perfect goodness He can bring.

Light and darkness, joy and sorrow,
Form the varied threads of love.
Death is but an earthly shadow :
All is life in Heaven above.

Wherefore linger, idly mourning
O’er these dying things of earth ?
Bear we not our Maker’s image ?
Share we not a heavenly birth ?

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Here in exile, homeward tending,
Citizens of Heaven are we,
Watching till our great Redeemer
Comes again to make us free.



Twenty-fourth Sunday after Trinity.

THE COLLECT.

O LORD, we beseech Thee, absolve Thy people from their offences; that through Thy bountiful goodness we may all be delivered from the bands of those sins, which by our frailty we have committed: Grant this, O Heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our blessed Lord and Saviour. Amen.

THE EPISTLE	∴	...	...	...	<i>Colossians</i> i. 3.
THE GOSPEL	...	...	...	...	<i>Matthew</i> ix. 18.
FIRST LESSONS	{	Morning	...	...	<i>Proverbs</i> xiii.
		Evening	...	...	<i>Proverbs</i> xiv.

THE Christian year begins to draw to a close; it seems intended, therefore, that we should examine ourselves to-day, whether the Word of life, manifested to us from Sunday to Sunday, has reached our hearts, and is bearing fruit in our lives.

I. We may test ourselves by the Epistle.

Can those who watch for our souls, and those who love us best, "give thanks to God" because they have heard of our "faith in Christ Jesus," and of the love we "have to all the saints, for the hope which is laid up" for us "in Heaven"? Do they perceive that the "word of the truth of the Gospel" bringeth forth fruit in us since the day we heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth? Do we ourselves know and feel that we are walking "worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God"?

II. Surely, if our self-examination is honest and searching, we shall own that there is good reason why we earnestly offer up the prayer of the Collect. We need to be absolved from our offences, and to be "delivered from the bands of those sins, which by our frailty we have committed." How slowly we grow in grace! How large a portion of our life is yet without the kingdom of God! How have the snares of death compassed us round about, because we have not kept clear and flowing the "fountain of life" which God has given us in His Son! Alas! our very gardens at this autumn season too often most truly represent our lives: full of the withered remains of things once beautiful and delightsome, whose

seed, now scattered and wasted, might have been made to produce a manifold greater and better life in the time to come. Let us, therefore, cry unto our Heavenly Father to absolve us from our offences, to forgive us all the dishonour we have done to His holy Name, to save us from all the consequences of our own folly, and to deliver us from the chains with which we have suffered our hearts to be bound. This He will do, if we ask faithfully, "for Jesus Christ's sake, our blessed Lord and Saviour."

III. Here let the Gospel come in both to instruct and to comfort us. It represents the spiritual condition of most of us: it points us to the One Absolver, the One Healer and Restorer. Are we sadly conscious of the disease of sin upon our souls, weakening and hindering us, so that we cannot "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing"? Let us then go to Christ with the simple earnest faith of her who said, "If I may but touch His garment, I shall be whole." And we may be sure that He will say unto us as unto her, "Be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole." Let us take advantage of all the means of grace within our reach, seeking through them to draw near to a living Saviour, that we may touch Him with the hand of faith.

Are we bitterly grieving over our own souls, or the souls of those we love, as fallen into "the snares of death," because there appears no fruitfulness in good works, no "increasing in the knowledge of God," no strength unto "patience and long-suffering with joyfulness"? Then let us imitate the faith of that "ruler" who came to Christ, saying, "My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay Thy hand upon her, and she shall live." He is not only "the Life of them that believe," but also "the Resurrection of the dead."

IV. The First Lessons abound in words of wisdom specially suitable for our meditation to-day.

Is there any one whose proud heart is tempted to refuse the confession of sinfulness contained in the Collect, who feels not his need of the Heavenly Absolver's voice, or who is quite satisfied with himself, and fears no evil from the sins which by his frailty he has committed? Let him ponder these words: "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."

Is any one sinking into despondency, as he thinks of the offences from which he needs to be absolved, and of the slow progress he has

made in the way of righteousness? Let him realize what *these* words mean, as addressed to one who has access to the Father through His Son: "In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence: and His children shall have a place of refuge."

Is any one becoming a formal and careless hearer of the teaching of Divine truth in the services of the Church? Let him take home this warning of the wise man, which we hear this morning: "Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed."

But there is one proverb which seems to express the whole teaching of this Sunday, as we have understood it: "The law of the wise is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death." Which saying cannot be better explained than by our Lord's own words: "If a man keep My saying he shall never see death"! If we turn unto Him with all our hearts, He will raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness, and will make us partakers hereafter of the glorious resurrection of His saints.



*TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER
TRINITY.*

“She is not dead, but sleepeth.”—THE GOSPEL.

That “we may all be delivered from the bands of those sins, which by our frailty we have committed.”—THE COLLECT.

As summer flowers in silence fade,
When frosty airs begin to blow,
In robes of beauty still array'd,
No sign of death awhile they show :

So slowly dies the worldly heart ;
So calmly falls the breath of sin
On careless souls, from Christ apart ;
They boast of life, all dead within.

O Christ, our everlasting Head !
They cannot die who cling to Thee :
Thy word of old awoke the dead,
And set the trembling sinner free.

Absolve our souls ; and let them know
Thy blessed freedom, born of love,
Whose work is peace on earth below,
Whose end is joy in Heaven above.



Twenty-fifth Sunday after Trinity.

THE COLLECT.

STIR up, we beseech Thee, O Lord, the wills of Thy faithful people ; that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may of Thee be plenteously rewarded ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE EPISTLE	... ..	<i>Jeremiah</i>	<i>xxiii.</i>	<i>5.</i>
THE GOSPEL	... ..	<i>John</i>	<i>vi.</i>	<i>5.</i>
FIRST LESSONS	{	Morning	... ..	<i>Proverbs</i> <i>xv.</i>
		Evening	... ..	<i>Proverbs</i> <i>xvi.</i>

A COMPARISON of the Collect for to-day with that for last Sunday will at once show us how suitably the one follows the other. We cannot plenteously bring forth the fruit of good works, unless we are first absolved from our offences ; no more than we can expect our fruit-trees to yield a rich supply in autumn, or our costly bulbs to put forth their beautiful life in spring, unless we first take care that they

are delivered from the corrupt remains of last year's growth. The ripening beams of the Sun of Righteousness cannot reach our souls until we have been set free from the bands of our sins. And if the bountiful goodness of our Heavenly Father, for our blessed Saviour's sake, has delivered us—if He has, according to His promise, "blotted out as a cloud our transgressions"—it is that He may stir up "the wills of His faithful people" to a better and heartier service for His Name's sake. Every Sunday, as it came round, has but brought us a fresh call from Him. "My son, give Me thine heart." All the varied instruction we have received has had but one end, to make us know and love our true King; to draw our hearts more deeply and entirely under His righteous sway; to make us more fruitful in good works. Alas, that we should have received so much from His love, and have so little fruit to show, as the swift years bring us nearer to His judgment-seat!

Most wisely have the Epistle and Gospel been selected; and both suggest deep and wholesome reflections for us all.

I. The Epistle, which is of course to be interpreted in a spiritual sense, bears a two-fold application to us to-day. It describes what Christ is now, and what is His work in His

Church ; and it foretells us what He will do hereafter. In one sense Jeremiah's prophecy is fulfilled : in another sense we still look for its fulfilment. God *has* raised "unto David a righteous Branch:" a King *is* reigning and prospering, and executing "judgment and justice in the land." We know "the Lord our Righteousness." He is gathering His people from all countries and from all parts. He has redeemed, He has prepared for them, He is guiding them on to "their own land." But we look for a more glorious fulfilment of the prophecy at Christ's final coming. Whatsoever now hinders the prosperity of His kingdom shall be taken away. The whole universe shall know the Lord our Righteousness. All His scattered people shall be gathered together ; and "they shall *dwell* in their own land." All shall have one will to serve one Lord, with one motive and one aim.

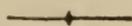
II. Looking to the Gospel, do we not perceive how we ourselves are represented by that "great company" gathered around Christ in the wilderness? So through all the Christian year, Sunday by Sunday, and day by day, has He been in the midst of us, distributing to each one of us, by His servants, the bread of life. And why has He thus made us to feel His compassion? Surely it

is that we may live by Him, and give ourselves to His service. We read that "when they were filled, He said unto His disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost." No doubt He intended by this to teach them the great lesson of wise economy in all things. God never gives us so much that we can afford to waste the least. But may we not also believe that He intended these fragments to be carried away by the multitude, as a proof that they had been miraculously fed by real bread, and that others, seeing this proof of His Almighty power, might be brought to believe in Him? Let *us* ask ourselves, then, to-day, what fragments of the feast of Divine truth, so richly spread before us through the year, have *we* to show? what holy thoughts? what heavenly dispositions? what good works? How many souls have we won, by our holy conversation and earnest endeavours, to love and serve the King?

III. From the First Lessons we can only learn what are these good works which, in the Collect, we pray that we may plenteously bring forth. It is remarkable how the voice of heavenly wisdom continually calls us to those virtues which St. Paul teaches us are the fruits of the Spirit: "Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meek-

ness, temperance." If we bring forth such works as these, it will be evident that *in us* the King is reigning and prospering, and that we have received Him as the Lord our Righteousness.

We find the same warning in this Evening's Lesson which we observed last Sunday, against self-confidence. "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Oh, let us know but one way, even Christ Himself, the Lord our Righteousness; let us trust in His merits, and be true to His service; let us look unto Him, and follow Him; let us watch for Him and work for Him: then shall we realize the blessed truth of those words we hear this evening, "In the light of the King's countenance is life; and His favour is as a cloud of the latter rain."



*TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER
TRINITY.*

THE GOSPEL, THE COLLECT.

Gone! a year with all its teaching!
Gone! a year in silence reaching
Onward to eternity!

God alone the same remaineth :
Love, His glory, never waneth,
 Though the world itself should die.

Heavenly warnings, vainly spoken,
Holy vows, too quickly broken,
 Now in sorrow we confess !
One sure hope is still before us :
One dear Name is breathèd o'er us ;
 Christ, "the Lord our Righteousness."

Man is failing ; earth is shaking :
Soon must all, from death awaking,
 Face to face their King behold.
Christ with living bread will feed us :
Through this desert He will lead us
 To the everlasting fold.

Stir our hearts, O God, and wake them
From the worldly cares that make them
 All unfit our Judge to see.
May Thine advent watching find us,
Leaving sin, like night, behind us,
 Turning evermore to Thee.



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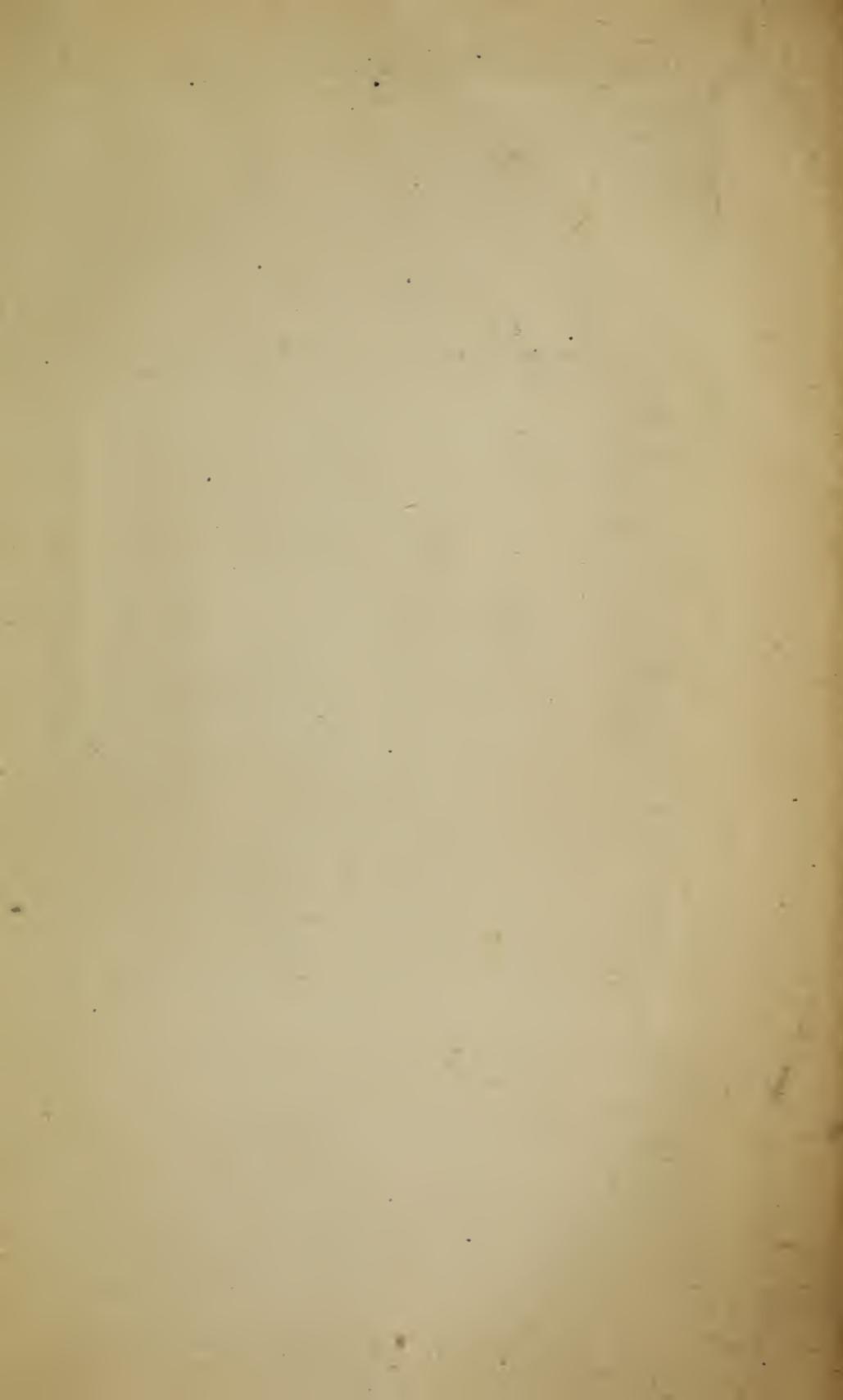
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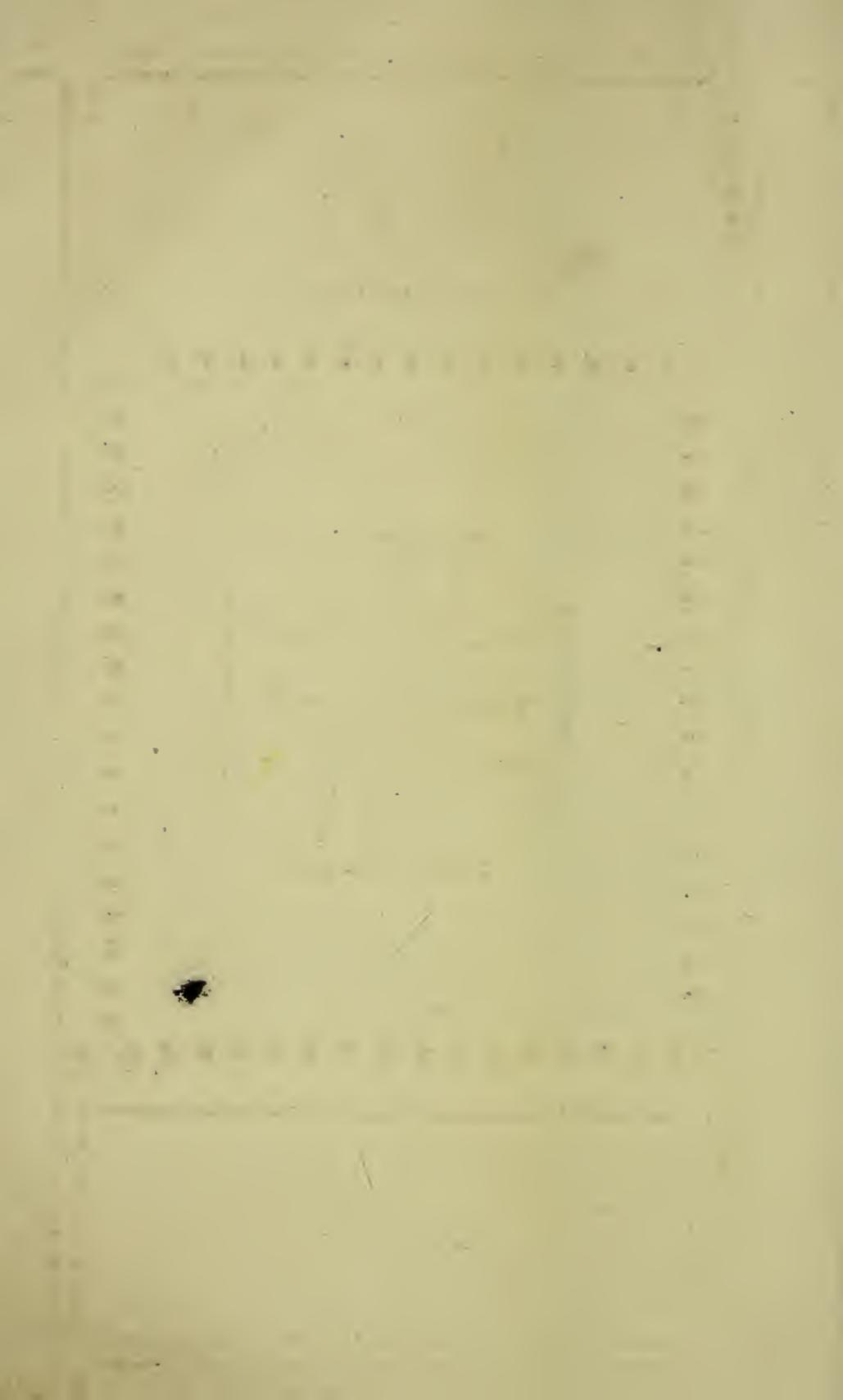
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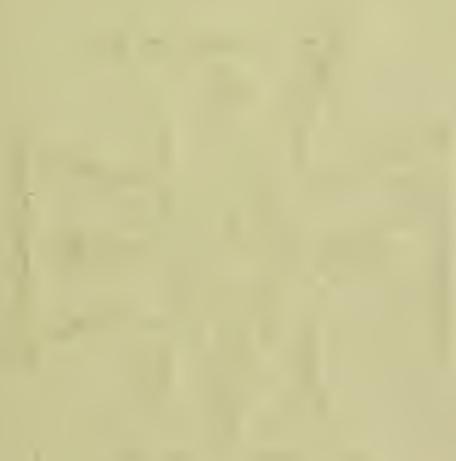
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