

COMMUTATION SURPLUS.

To the Editor of THE DOMINION CHURCHMAN.

SIR,—The clergy of this Diocese accepted their position with the understanding that they would derive benefit from this Fund as soon as, in the Providence of God, their turn for relief should come.

After having been kept from their just expectations for years by the effects of past mismanagement, Divine Providence has, at last, brought a large number within the range of its benefits, notwithstanding certain efforts which were being made to the contrary.

Can it be true that an effort is now again being made to reduce the large capital thus made available, and crush the "hopes long deferred," and break hearts that have been made sick by unnecessary delays in the distribution of the surplus?

There is a rumour, also, that the Commissioners of the Dioceses of Toronto and Niagara are placing impediments in the way of distribution to the instant necessities of those who have just claims, and actually proposing expensive litigation over the Fund. This would be mismanagement with a vengeance! Have they not confidence in each others common honesty and common sense?

EXPECTANT.

FASTING COMMUNION.

To the Editor of THE DOMINION CHURCHMAN.

SIR,—I think that the question of Fasting Communion, lately broached and discussed in your columns, may be helped to solution by the following considerations, chiefly drawn from the standard tracts of Ashwell and Rodwell on "Evening Communion."

1. The general consideration of *propriety* in such a custom. Let it be granted that it is a proper, wholesome, and pious custom to devote our earliest waking hour of each day to religious meditation and prayer (as in family worship), before we launch ourselves upon the billows of business life, and the whole thing is conceded: for the arguments for such a practice apply *a fortiori* to that sacred rite instituted by our Lord Himself. If it be the proper thing to begin the day with God, and consecrate to Him the first fruits of a new lease of life, how can we so well do it as by Eucharistic Communion? The thing follows as a piece of irresistible logic.

2. The fact that the Communion was instituted "after supper" is no argument for our modern fashion of celebrating it "after breakfast": but the contrary. This Paschal Supper was no ordinary supper, but belonged precisely to the same class of meals as our Holy Communion itself—a sacred and solemn feast; not even a "feast" in the common acceptance of that word, inasmuch as it was strictly ceremonial and had among its significant ingredients bitter herbs and unleavened bread. In a word it was not for bodily refreshment, but religious edification. More than that, it was preceded by a long fast, and was itself a prolonged abstinence from ordinary refreshment. In fact it was substantially what the AGAPE was afterwards in conjunction with the Eucharist; the degeneration of which into an ordinary social meal under the name of the "Lord's Supper" is so severely condemned by St. Paul in 1 Cor. xi. Hence it is impossible to argue seriously on this ground for after breakfast Communion; the whole analogy requiring that we should separate our Communion by as long a period as possible from any ordinary meal before it, even a religious meal, such as the Agape or the Paschal Supper, preceding it being conducted with special solemnity and abstemiousness, so as to be in itself a religious preparation for the still more solemn ceremony of the Eucharist.

3. The fact that the institution took place "in the evening" is no argument (but the contrary) for late Communion. As a matter of fact, clearly, the institution was not in the evening at all, but after the evening had come, and night itself was well advanced. The slaying of the Paschal Lamb did not take place till "between the evenings" (twilight; 6 to 8 p.m.), Exod. xii. 6; between the disappearance of the sun's dusk (sunset) and the total vanishing of light. Slain thus late in the day, the Lamb was not eaten till *sera nocte*, Exod.

xii. 8—late at night. The ceremonies of using bitter herbs, searching for leaven, singing at intervals the six Hallel psalms, participating in the series of cups of wine then used &c., explanations, benedictions, &c., would under ordinary circumstances carry the members of the Paschal circle well into *midnight*. To all this, moreover, we have to add what the Gospel tells us of our Lord's significant interpretations—the Washing of the Feet, the solemn conversations, &c.; and it is impossible to understand how all this could conclude till well after *midnight*, on the night of the Institution. This rationale utterly subverts the idea of Evening Communion, as having any ground in the scriptures. Let those who will follow the scriptures closely in this matter begin their religious "exercises" about sunset and continue them in solemn preparation till midnight, and then celebrate the Eucharist—nothing less than this will satisfy the logic of the case and fulfil the analogy of the institution by our Lord. No greater contrast to such a scene can be conceived than the ordinary after breakfast, or after dinner, or after tea celebrations.

4. It was the custom of the ancient Church to celebrate *very early in the morning*. We all know Pliny's reference to their ante-lucan (before daylight) assemblies for the sacrament. It was universally recognized as connected with the celebration of our Lord's Resurrection, and as such proper in the very earliest hours of the morning—"ante omnem cibum," before any ordinary food. There were such things as *afternoon* Communion in those days; it is true, but they were still *before breakfast*; because they were only permitted on the *Fastdays* of the week (not the Lord's day) after 3 p.m., at which time the fast proper on Wednesdays and Fridays closed. These afternoon Communion on "Station-days" were to be participated in "esuriens" and "ante prandium." So in the case of the Easter Eve Communion of the new baptized; Easter Eve in Holy Saturday being one of the most solemn *fast-days* of the Christian year. A portion of the African Church had a singular custom of having a sort of Evening Communion on one evening in the year, namely, Maunday Thursday, in supposed commemoration of the Institution, but this only serves admirably to prove the rule, both as to the universal custom during the rest of the year, and as to the absence of this African singularity in the other portions of the Primitive Church. Elsewhere in the Fathers, we find such Communion described as "strange customs of singular sects."

5. Your correspondent, "More Suo" inveighs with Bishop Wordsworth whom he quotes, against *Lord's-day fasting* and making fasting a necessary pre-requisite. Proper, decent, reverent, pious, wholesome, as the custom of Early and Fasting Communion is; it cannot be said to be absolutely and invariably necessary, and a prejudice in favour of it should not be allowed to spread gloom over any portion of the Lord's Day which is always a Feast. All that is required is that we should, whenever possible, make *this the first act* of every day, so occupy our first hour of the morning; but to abstain from Communion at noon, because we have not been able to communicate before breakfast, or to fast till noon on the Lord's day in order to participate is to "make the word of God of none effect through our traditions."

Yours,
R. H.

Dec. 29, 1876.

Family Reading.

ONE LIFE ONLY.

CHAPTER X.—Continued.

From that hour Lilith had shut herself up in the rectory, and had been seen by no one—even Una had been excluded, although their intimacy had ripened into a strong friendship, and she felt by no means certain that Lilith would receive her even now. Anything was better than staying at home however, so, wrapped in a long waterproof cloak, she battled her way through wind and rain to the parsonage gate. Here she encountered the rector, who had just arrived from the opposite direction, and he welcomed her with a warmth very unusual to him, and said he was truly glad

she had come to see his sister, as she did not appear to be well, and was certainly too much alone. Without consulting Lilith at all, he took Miss Dy-sart at once into the room where she was, and left them alone together.

For a moment Una stood looking in silence at the young girl, who did not seem conscious of her entrance. Lilith was sitting at the window, framed in by the heavy crimson curtains which hung on either side of her, and so perfectly still and motionless that she looked in her white dress much more like a marble statue set in a niche than a living human being. Her fair face had the waxen purity of a white camellia—entirely without colour, and wearing an expression of passionless calm, such as is rarely seen except on the face of the dead, who have done forever with the world and its cares. An open book lay upon her knee; but her hands were clasped over the unread pages, and her blue eyes, fixed and dim, gazed out through the window with a vacant look, which showed that they saw nothing of the objects to which they were turned.

She slowly rose as Una came towards her, and yielded passively to her embrace, without any of the eager affection she had always hitherto shown to her friend, and then dropped back into her seat and turned again to the window, as if to resume her gaze on the unseen far-off vision which seemed to occupy her. Una hardly knew how to address her; she was so unlike the loving, child-like Lilith who had always welcomed her with eagerness, and spoken so freely of all the little interests of her life; of Rupert Northcoate, it is true, they had not often talked, for Una respected her delicate reserve on the subject which lay so near her heart; but there had been a tacit understanding between them that Lilith would certainly one day be his wife.

Determined at last to break the oppressive silence in any way, Una began to speak of the gay little flower-garden which lay spread out before the windows, and had been one of Lilith's favourite amusements.

"I see your gardener has been making some alterations," she said; "I hope you did not forget to tell him to carry out my special wish, and have a bed prepared to be entirely filled with snowdrops next spring."

"Hervey told him, I believe," said Lilith in a low, measured tone.

"Then, when the time comes for them to appear, you will have a multitude of little likenesses of yourself just under the window. You will only have to look at them to know exactly how you appear to us commonplace mortals."

"I shall not see them," said Lilith.

"Why not? have you any plan for travelling next year?"

"No; but I shall not see them—because I shall be dead," she answered composedly.

"My darling! what are you saying?"

"Yes, it is true; and I am very glad of it."

"Oh, Lilith! you must not speak in that wild way; you are simply depressed and morbid. You will live to a good old age, I hope and believe."

"Do you remember the little singing bird Rupert shot?" said Lilith, turning her great blue eyes, with their unnatural calm, on Una's face.

"I remember the dead bird on the hillside, you pitied so much; but we do not know that Mr. Northcoate shot it, do we?"

"Yes, it was his hand that killed it; he told me he was out with his gun in that very place a few hours before we went to it, and for want of better sport, he took aim at a little bird soaring up through the sunny air on its happy wings, and brought it down all faint and wounded to the earth, where it beat about, helpless and quivering, till it died."

"He might have been better employed, certainly; but why think about that poor little bird now, Lilith? I am afraid it only shared the fate of thousands in this sporting county."

"Doubtless; and so shall I; but I shall die as that bird did, Una." She spoke with such a set, rigid face, and so much quiet certainty, that it seemed impossible to answer her.

Happily, Una was spared the necessity; a quick, eager step came to the door, and Hervey dashed into the room, his handsome face glowing with excitement and pleasure.