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Canadian Churchman.

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LESSONS FOR SUNDAYS AND HOLY DAYS.

Dec. 19th. FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

Morning. Isaiah 30, 10 v. 27. Rev. 4.

Evening. Isaiah 32: 1 of 33, v. 2 to 23. Rev. 5.

Appropriate Hymns for Fourth Sunday in Advent, Christmas Day, and First Sunday after Christmas, compiled by Mr. F. Gatward, organist and choirmaster of St. Luke's Cathedral, Halifax, N.S. The numbers are taken from H.A. and M., but many of which are found in other hymnals:

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

Holy Communion: 50, 317, 319, 322.

Processional: 47, 53, 280, 463.

Offertory: 49, 203, 398, 537.

Children's Hymns: 48, 340, 346, 570.

General Hymns: 31, 51, 54, 193, 521, 535.

Christmas Day: 55, 59, 60, 61, 62, 316, 329.

HYMNS FOR FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS.

Holy Communion: 64, 309, 311, 558.

Processional: 59, 60, 65, 175.

Offertory: 56, 61, 67, 288.

Children's Hymns: 62, 333, 335, 343.

General Hymns: 57, 58, 63, 66, 482, 484.

CHRISTMAS.

How comes it to pass that Christmas is the Festival of the whole Christian year that has the greatest attraction for the hearts of men, and most moves their sensibilities? It is not the greatest of the Christian festivals. That place must be assigned to the great Paschal Feast, to the Festival of Easter. Not only has the Church placed Easter at the head of all her festivals, in all ages, but the reason for this position is obvious. When the disciples went forth to proclaim the good news of salvation, they preached Jesus and the Resurrection; and the Resurrection is the great fact upon which we build our dearest hopes. Then the Festival of Whitsunday—the Christian Pentecost—might claim a supreme place in

our thoughts, since it is not only the day which commemorates the revelation of the Third Person in the Holy Trinity, the day of the manifestation of the Holy Ghost, but it is also the culminating point in the whole series of divine revelation. It is indeed a festival that must be ever dear to the heart which has experience of Divine grace, which knows the indwelling of God.

These are great, glorious, and venerable festivals, dear to the Christian heart, kept with grateful love and adoration, with a sense of the greatness of God's goodness, and with earnest desires for deeper and nearer fellowship with Him. Yet they do not make the appeal to the heart which is made by Christmas Day. And how is this?

To answer this question is not easy, for it is to set forth all the power and attractiveness

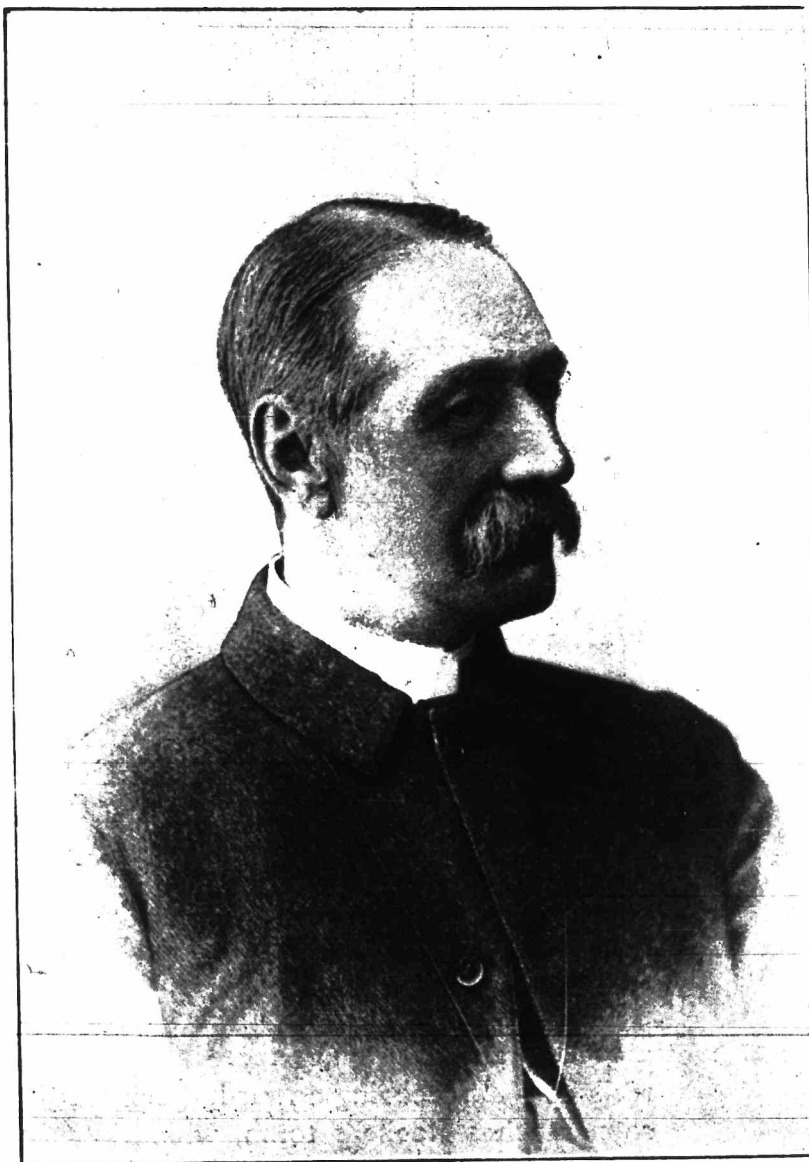
Christmas Day is the answer to these longings, the fulfilment of these desires. Now, at last, the Desire of all nations has come. The Lord whom they sought, is suddenly come to His temple.

"This day hath God fulfilled His promised Word. This day is born a Saviour, Christ the Lord."

It is no matter whether the day which we observe is the precise day in the year on which the Son of God and Man was born into the world. Some have argued and proved to their own satisfaction that it is the very day. Others have sought to prove that it cannot be the day. But it is the day sanctioned and sanctified by the usage of at least fourteen centuries; and we have all these hallowed associations around us when we keep this feast, and think what it is that we are commemorating on this day! It is the day of the birth into

time of the Eternal Word of God, who has assumed man's nature, who has "become flesh," and presents Himself to the eyes and hearts of men, as the image of the invisible God. God is now "manifest in the flesh," no longer merely spoken of, heard of, but seen, felt, experienced, as a living presence—one of ourselves, very man, yet of one substance with the Father, very God. Nor is this all. It is not merely God in the likeness of flesh, God made man; but it is God in the person of a little child. "He took a little child and set Him in the midst of them." We think, as we meditate upon this manner of manifestation of the "tender mercy of our God whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us,"—it is mercy, it is grace, it is love, it is "tender mercy," and it touches us like the hand of a little child.

Nor is this all. The very circumstances of the nativity have a charm and a power of their own, such as no other events in human history can exercise. Jew and Gentile



REV. PROF. CLARK, LL.D.

of this gracious and blessed festival; and, when we have exhausted all the products of our imagination, we shall feel that we have left the greatest part unsaid. For one thing, Christmas Day commemorates the Divine response to men's longings, continued, deepened, intensified through long ages of waiting. Men did not clearly realize what they were waiting for. They were looking for the coming of the seed of the woman that was to bruise the head of the serpent, although they might not know all that was involved in that promise. They were looking for the Prophet promised through Moses, and they knew at least that they needed a Teacher who should guide them into the way of truth. They were looking for a King of Righteousness, who should do justice and judgment on the earth.

alike draw near to offer their homage to the new-born King. There were "shepherds abiding in the field, and keeping watch by night over their flocks." They were representatives of the faithful remnant of Israel. Not all had abandoned the hopes of their fathers, and they were guided to the stable where He lay whom they hoped for. They "found the Babe lying in the manger;" and when they had seen and worshipped, they "returned glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen." Nor was this all. He who was born on Christmas Day was the glory of His people Israel, but He was also a light to lighten the Gentiles. He was the desire of all nations; and Gentile as well as Jew did homage at His manger throne. How grandly this is expressed by our great Milton: