

Dominion Churchman.

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LESSONS for SUNDAYS and HOLY-DAYS.

August 21st.—ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.
Morning.—1 Kings xviii. 1 Corinthians i. 26 & ii.
Evening.—1 Kings xix, or 1 Kings xxi. Matt. xvii to 27.

THURSDAY, AUG. 18, 1887.

The Rev. W. H. Wadleigh is the only gentleman travelling authorized to collect subscriptions for the "*Dominion Churchman*."

To CORRESPONDENTS.—All matter for publication in any number of **DOMINION CHURCHMAN** should be in the office not later than Thursday for the following week's issue.

MORAL INEFFECTUACY OF FEAR.—The Roman Catholic Church, says the Bishop of Meath, distinguishes two grades or degrees of penitence; the one perfect, the other imperfect. Perfect penitence they call contrition; it consists in hating sin as such, for its own sake, not for the sake of its punishment; in hating it from love of God, rather than from fear of hell. Imperfect penitence they distinguish it by the name of attrition; it consists in hating sin from fear of hell, rather than from love of God; in hating it, not so much for its own sake as for the sake of its results. Now it is easy to see that the man who shrinks from sinning merely because he fears being punished is no more to be accounted really penitent than he who abstains from theft simply because he fears the gaol is to be accounted honest. Take away, in either case, the fear of consequences, and the man will sin without the least remorse. Attrition, therefore, seems not to deserve the name of penitence at all, since there is in it no love of God, no horror of sin for its own sake; it rests upon a purely selfish calculation of consequences, and involves no change of heart.

And this is probably the secret of the ultimate inefficacy of those appeals to one of the baser parts of our nature, the passion of fear, to which revival preachers too frequently confine themselves. They may terrify their hearers for a time; but as soon as the effect of terror has gone off—and it is generally transient—the supposed convert will return to the practices which he had abandoned, not from love of God, a motive noble and permanent, but from mere dread of hell, which he will

find plenty of persons in these days to sneer out of his convictions.

THE DANGER OF ROMISH TEACHING.—The Roman Catholic system practically says: "You need not feel any very great degree of sorrow for your sin, you need not hate sin in itself, you need not hate it because it is hateful to your heavenly Father; there is no absolute need of your endeavouring to purify yourself, as He whom you profess to serve is pure. I will make things easier for you; provided only you do not like hell fire; provided only you shrink from everlasting burnings, you may come to me, and if you will only confess without reserve your wicked acts, and words, and thoughts, so far as you are able to recollect them, I will absolve you from all your sins, though you have really little or no sorrow for them, and will restore you to the favor of God, though in reality you do not love God, but are only afraid of Him." This is actually the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church as expounded by St. Alphonsus Liguori, who, being a "Doctor of the Church," has had his works stamped with universal approbation, a Papal rescript declaring in so many words that there is not a single censurable proposition in them, and that they are a perfectly safe guide to Confessors and Directors. And I confess that of all parts of the Roman Catholic system this appears to me the most dangerous, because it teaches that man can be saved without loving God at all.

THE SYSTEM OF ENFORCED CONFESSION WRONG.—Again, the effort to recall every sinful act that has taken place since the last previous confession (and this is inculcated on all who practice habitual confession, because a knowingly imperfect confession is worse than none at all), besides being likely to produce a mechanical and most defective idea of sin, tends to make the penitent dwell on his individual sinful acts far more than is good for his soul's health. And not merely must this be done. The penitent must state every circumstance which can modify his guilt, in order to the due apportionment of penance, with the inevitable result that the polluting or alluring details, still more becloud his imagination, and not only his, but the imagination of his Confessor also. This is a matter to which I can only allude; but is of deadly moment. Again the consequence of habitual confession, extending to the utmost minutiae, must be that the clergy who conduct it acquire a knowledge of the secrets of their penitents, the possession of which must be as dangerous to themselves as it is degrading to their flock. Such knowledge is too high for man; it exalts him into the place of God, and, accordingly, the doctrine and practice of the Confessional, where it is fully organized, trenches on blasphemy, inasmuch as it is expressly laid down that what the priest has heard in Confession he knows not as man, but as God, the conclusion being that as man he may deny, and ought to deny, even with an oath, all knowledge of what he has thus heard. This doctrine, which is formulated in so many words in the Latin Church, is the necessary result of enforced confession, and, on the logical principle, that premisses leading to false conclusions must be false themselves, we are authorized to conclude that the whole system of enforced confession is necessarily wrong, since it necessarily leads to such monstrous results.

OBSTACLES TO LAY HELP.—The *Church Times* speaks out plainly in regard to one of the obstacles in the way of Lay Help.

"It is humiliating to confess that one reason why laymen are not asked, and why their help is not obtained, is, in not a few cases, because the clergy are jealous of power and influence going out of their own hands. They would frequently prefer to have a good work left undone rather than that

they themselves should not be the doers of it. It is a very curious fact, but a careful study of Church history shows that it is a fact, that lust of personal power has ever been one of the characteristic vices of the clerical order. Experience proves that it is so still. Incumbents, in a large number of instances, will not let laymen carry out their own rough and ready efforts in their own rough and ready way, but will tie them down by restrictions which in many instances have seriously cramped their energies. Jealousy is at the bottom of this. The vicar fancies that he is losing something of his dignity if he is not the recognized active head and manager of everything. This, of course, is monstrously absurd, and if such a spirit be indulged in, it must necessarily paralyse a great deal of good work which might otherwise be accomplished."

PLAIN WORDS TO LAYMEN.—Continuing the article above quoted, the writer says: "Yet the clergy are not the only ones in fault as regards this matter. It is by no means infrequent for laymen who are put in positions of trust in a parish to make themselves exceedingly unpleasant by their 'bump-tiousness,' or, in other words, by their lack of Christian humility. Instead of feeling that they are working amongst their poorer brethren for the furtherance of God's honor and glory—for the management of a parochial cricket club is, in its way, as much work done for God as that of a Sunday school—they are apt to turn it to the glorification of themselves. Anything more contemptible than such miserable self-seeking it is difficult to conceive, and every man who gives way to it must, in his quiet moments, supposing that he is not eaten up with self-importance, feel how contemptible it is. The fact is that by the exercise of ordinary Christian humility, and consideration for others, on the part of both the clergy and the lay-workers, the balance of power may be maintained without danger of mischievous friction. The clergyman should exercise all possible consideration to his lay assistants, and strengthen their hands as much as possible, whilst, on the other hand, the lay-workers should act with thorough loyalty to their parochial superior, bearing always in mind that they are to be his assistants by virtue of the offices which they hold, and not his rivals in the matter of influence and power."

THE BEST LAY HELP TO BE HAD FOR ASKING.—"It is one of the greatest mistakes to suppose that there is any real difficulty in procuring lay help in any ordinary town parish. In nine cases out of ten the reason why it is not forthcoming is because clergymen are afraid of asking for it. Why they should be afraid passes laymen's understanding. Of course, in making such a suggestion to a parishioner, tact should be used and care taken not to apply to an improper person. But, as a matter of fact, there is a great deal of good in almost every man, even in the most unpromising, which only wants bringing out; and one of the greatest kindnesses which can be done to such an one is to give him an opportunity of exercising his higher and better nature; and what is more, the man himself, if he is worth anything, will be the first to recognize this. But it must be noted that men must be asked to help; there are comparatively few who will, of their own accord, volunteer their services; and those who do so are, by no means, always the best. This class embraces the fussy men who, to use an expressive vulgarism, like to have 'a finger in every pie'; meddling men, who will do more harm than good; intrusive men, who will look with a jealous eye upon the other lay helpers, because everything is not in their own hands. A modest fellow who, when he is asked by the vicar to help, replies: 'O Yes, I should be very glad to be of some use, but I really don't know of anything that I can do,' will very likely turn out to be worth half-a-dozen of such spontaneous volunteers as those above described, supposing that some suitable work can be found for him."