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hymns is too often delegated to the organist, and as a matter of fact, I have known instances when the hymns have been chosen by the organist, and almost haphazard, only a few minutes before the commencement of Divine Service.

I have been told that the shortening of the prayers has become necessary because so much time is occupied in singing. It is true, I almost wrote too true, that much of the short time (now supposed to be enough for our congregations) allotted to Divine Service is so occupied. There are the canticles, sometimes the Psalms, and four, often five, and even six hymns during morning service, besides the almost universal custom of singing the responses to the Commandments; (with reference to which, I for one, would gladly see the old use restored;) and there are four or five hymns during evening service. I submit with all deference that the shortening process might well be applied to the singing, and so the supposed necessity for curtailing the prayers would be removed.

In connection with the singing, I would refer, with very great pain, to the far too common and irreverent conduct of the choirs during the service, who frequently occupy themselves with their books and whispered consultations, and I quote the Bishop of Rochester, Dr. Thorold, on the point. He says, "I am in favour of a surpliced choir, but bargain for two things, clean surplices, and a choir, which when surpliced, is not to be distinguished for bad singing. I know choirs whose singing is almost a means of grace, it is done so beautifully, so reverently, and with so much care. I have also, I am sorry to say, seen choirs who during the service were turning over their music or whispering, and not praying, and people see it and are chilled, and those who ought to be nearest to God, and helpers in the service, are actually hindrances."

4th. On the last point, the sermon, I write with much diffidence, and do not desire to discuss the question of written or extempore sermons, nor the manner of the preacher, but to refer to the very infrequent occasions when the preacher notices the special day or season—of course this does not include Christmas, Easter or Whitsuntide—and I take leave to urge that this is much to be regretted, and that the clergy lose many a great opportunity of inculcating sound Church teaching.

Where it is adopted, the custom of teaching the people the reasons for observing the days or times is found to be most useful, and the teaching is often very much needed. The congregations are much too liable to be lax in their attention to the service, but much of their want of attention and their want of knowledge is due to the want of teaching. It is often painfully noticeable—for example, the anthem for Easter Day is rarely found by the greater part of the congregation, and on the days when proper psalms are used, one might be excused for assuming that not one in a hundred had ever heard of such, and certainly had never looked at the table for them, and the same applies to the days when the Athanasian Creed is used, and to the direction in the rubric as to the 95th psalm on the 19th day of the month, when almost invariably the organist and choir go on as usual in utter neglect of the rubric. I venture to think that teaching from the pulpit would soon remedy some of these blemishes to our services, besides exciting more interest in the minds of the people about the various seasons in the church's year.

None of the points I have referred to involve any controversial question, and indeed are noticeable in all our churches. I shall be glad, if by your means, this letter may draw attention to the subject, and that some of your readers, clerical and lay, will say how far they agree with, or dissent from what I have urged, and if the latter, I will, with your leave, endeavour to sustain my position.

ONE OF THE LAITY.

Sunday School Lesson.

2nd Sunday in Lent. March 2nd, 1890.

"THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST."

When Christ died, His friends gave up all hope, although He had foretold His Resurrection. They "trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel," and all their hopes were buried in His grave.

While friends despaired and enemies triumphed the Great Conqueror won His final victory over death, and took again the life He had laid down, according to His own promise. (S. John x. 18).

I.—ACCOUNT OF THE RESURRECTION.

Mary Magdalene, Johanna, Mary, the mother of James, and the other women who had followed the Lord from Galilee, came very early in the morning to the sepulchre. They brought spices to complete the embalming of the sacred body, which could not be done on the Sabbath. "They said among themselves, 'who shall roll us away the stone from the door of

the sepulchre.'" This question was soon answered, for an angel rolled away the stone, and frightened the soldiers who might have opposed their entrance.

Guard and stone were alike useless and keeping the door of an empty tomb; Christ had risen and passed out in spite of them. The disciples were slow to believe the wonderful news (S. Mark xvi. 11-13; S. Luke xxiv. 11); but before that first glorious Easter Day was over, he had shown Himself to Mary Magdalene (S. John xx. 16), to the other women (S. Matt. xxviii. 9) to two disciples, to S. Peter and to ten Apostles (S. Luke xxiv. 13-36).

II.—THE MEANING OF THE RESURRECTION.

By rising again our Lord did two things:

1. *He conquered Death for Himself.* He had won the victory over Satan and his angels (S. Matt. iv. 10, 11; Col. ii. 15; Heb. ii. 14) and had conquered sin by forgiving it (S. Luke vii. 48-50; Col. ii. 13, 14). Disease, the result of sin, fled before Him, and now He had vanquished the last enemy, Death (1 Cor. 15-26), "abolished death," (2 Tim. ii. 10).

2. *He conquered Death for us.* If Christ had not risen our condition would have been hopeless. (1 Cor. xv. 17). In that case He would have been the vanquished one and Death the conqueror; but now our Leader has won the victory, and His followers should not tremble before a fallen foe, but join in S. Paul's shout of triumph. (1 Cor. xv. 55-57.)

Christ, who could rise again from the dead, can also raise us. He is the first fruits of them that slept. (1 Cor. xv. 20.) On the day of His resurrection, the first ripe sheaf of barley was waved before the Lord, as a pledge of the harvest. (Lev. xxiii. 10, 11.) So His resurrection is the pledge of ours. (Rom. vi. 5.)

III.—THE RESURRECTION OF THE SOUL.

By this is meant the soul passing from the death of sin, to the life of holiness. Baptism is "a death unto sin and a new life unto righteousness." (Rom. vi. 4, 5, 11; Col. ii. 12.) But the new life is then only begun and grows slowly, like our natural life; needing constant care and nourishment. (1 S. Pet. ii. 2; S. John vi. 27, 35, 51.)

Our affections must be set on things above. (Col. iii. 1, 2.) If we care only for earthly things now, we can hardly expect to care for heavenly things suddenly, when this life is over.

Family Reading.

Devotional Notes on the Sermon on the Mount.

8—THE FOURTH BEATITUDE.

"Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."—S. Matt. v. 6.

The position of this Beatitude is very remarkable, as its connexion with the two great portions into which it divides the whole series. It is the central one of the seven. The first three lead up to it, and the last three may be said to proceed from it. The first three, as we have seen, follow naturally the one upon the other, depicting the progress of spiritual experience. They tell us of the establishment of right relations in the soul towards God and towards man. We are now to contemplate the condition of the heart which has become established in the life of grace, in the love of God.

Man's heart, when right—right with God and with man—hungers and thirsts after righteousness. A man hungers for the thing which he regards as his chief good. And so one man hungers and thirsts for pleasure, and another for money, and another for fame. Or rather, each man hungers for satisfaction, craves for the fulfilment of his desires; but each finds that satisfaction in the thing which corresponds with his own nature.

There is something in man, as man, which cries out for God. Nothing else can ever satisfy him. "Thou hast made as for Thyself, and our heart is restless until it rest in Thee." We may go further. It is not in God merely as the infinite, eternal, all-sufficient strength and support that we desire Him; but as the Holy and Righteous One. Even the unconquered says: "I delight in the law of God after the inner man." The very heathen could say: "I see and approve the better, whilst I follow the worse."

But the case is far more urgent in those who have obtained the first fruits of the Spirit, in those who are born anew to God. They have tasted and seen "the beauty of holiness." With the unregenerate man there is an undefined craving, a hunger for something, he hardly knows what. He only knows that he is hungry and thirsty; but he knows little of the object which he must find in order to appease his hunger and his thirst. It is

very different with those whose spiritual senses are "exercised to discern good and evil."

They have known the sweetness of righteousness, or rather, of the Righteous One. "To them that believe in Him and love Him, 'He is precious,' 'His Name is as ointment poured forth.'" To know Him is to love Him and to desire Him, to long for more perfect communion with Him, and for that absolute holiness without which intimate communion with the Holy One is impossible. And so they hunger and thirst after righteousness and the Righteous One.

Here again we light upon the key note of the Sermon on the Mount—righteousness and blessedness through righteousness. All outside of this sphere is comparatively worthless. And this is known to those who are living the blessed life. It is not that they sit down and calculate that by means of righteousness they may attain to happiness. They know too well that the pursuit of happiness ordinarily means failure and disappointment. It is rather that they have so true a perception of the beauty of the Kingdom of God that they cannot but long for its righteousness.

And such hunger and thirst are not like the painful earthly appetites which craved for material food, and, when they obtain it, have their solicitations stilled. There is sweetness in this craving and in its gratification; and it is never stilled, for it possesses for ever the joy of desire and the joy of satiety. "Nearer, my God, to Thee" is its increasing cry. And ever as it comes nearer, more urgent grows its desire for closer and more intimate communion with God.

And this explains to us the love of God's word, the delight with which men of God turn from the occupations of earth to listen to those heavenly strains which sound in the ear like the harps of angels. This explains the sweetness of prayer, of meditation, of public worship, of the blessed sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, in which He feeds us with that flesh which is meat indeed, and that blood which is drink indeed. Thus do we know that we hunger and thirst after righteousness, when we say of God's word that it is sweeter than honey to our taste, when we say of the House of Prayer, "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord."

But we must turn to the promise to see the manner in which the hungering are made blessed, "They shall be filled." A hunger which found no food, a thirst which found no refreshing draught to stay its cravings, could bring no blessedness, but only misery. But this can never be the condition of those who are longing for righteousness. We might almost say that this is the only blessing of which there is an inexhaustible supply, and which is always present with us. For righteousness is the Righteous One, is God. And it is His very nature to communicate Himself wherever He can, wherever there is a preparation for His presence and dwelling.

Nay, more, the very craving which longs for Him is a sign and token of His presence. As we have said, it is those who have already tasted, that desire to drink full draughts of the river of His pleasures. And this first participation is the pledge and prelude of many a blessed draught in the future. "They shall be filled." Every act and condition of life will be made a channel through which the water of life will flow into them. The Holy Communion, the Sacred Scriptures, Prayer public and private, Meditation on God and His grace and glory, the preaching of the word—these we call means of grace, and by all these will God replenish our hungry souls; but not by these alone. In the performance of every duty, in the enduring of every trial, in every society, in all joys and in all sorrows, the blessing may come to us. Even when passing through the valley of Baca we shall find a well in which the water of life will be springing up.

"They shall hunger no more, neither shall they thirst any more," we read of a time when the painful hunger of life shall be over; but assuredly that does not mean that then desire shall cease; for in that state in which God's servants shall serve Him and shall see His face, they will find their blessedness in being satisfied with His righteousness. They shall drink of the water of life that proceedeth out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.