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LESSONS for SUNDAYS and HOLY-DAYS.

AUGUST 22nd—9th SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.
Morning—1 Kings x to 25. 1 Corinthe iii.
Evening—1 Kings xi. to 15; or 1 Kings xi. 26. Mat' hew 27 to 57.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 19, 1886.

RITUAL AND CEREMONY.—The first principle on which the proper use of ceremonial can be based is that it is for the sake of God Almighty's glory and beauty; and in addition to this we find that the whole scheme of redemption shows that God establishes communion between Himself and mankind not only through purely mental acts, such as the exercise of the thought and will, but also through the body and bodily acts. For when a perfect spiritual intercourse was to be renewed between the Creator and His creatures, God, Who "is a Spirit," took upon Him a bodily nature, and by means of it became a Mediator through Whom that intercourse could be brought about and maintained. The Sacraments also "ordained by Christ Himself" for the particular application of His mediation are "outward and visible signs," endowed by Him with the capacity of conveying "inward and spiritual grace" to the soul. In correspondence with this, the ceremony in worship may be considered as the external body of words and actions by which worship is expressed and exhibited before God and man. As it is ordained that man should tell their wants to God in prayer, although He knows better than they know themselves what each one's necessities are, so also is it ordained that spiritual worship should be shown forth to Him by words and actions, although He could perfectly know it without such intervention. Man glorifies God in his body and spirit which are His.

It may be useful, before proceeding farther, to notice the distinction there is between the two terms, *Ceremonial* and *Ritual*. A ceremony is a solemn religious act of reverence or dignity. A rite is the religious usage, custom, or mode in which such and such a thing is done. Ritual, then, signifies the accurate performance of the usage or custom; ceremonial the dignity or pomp with which the ritual is surrounded—e. g., the ritual in the Marriage Service is the giving and receiving of the ring, the joining of hands—a beautiful rite which, by the way, is peculiar to our own Marriage Service—and the blessings given; the ceremonial is the attendance on the bride, the various positions taken, first in the body of the Church, then the procession to the Altar, and so on. Applying this to what has been said, ritual comes in to effect the orderly carrying out of the showing forth of our spiritual worship, and ceremonial comes in to add dignity, and solemnity, and reverence, before the presence of Him Who is, in all ages, glorious and beautiful.

THE MORAL DANGER OF FREE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.—It is sometimes stated that people value a thing when it costs them something to get it. The

argument is not to be despised; but we think that it yields in importance to the consideration, that the payment of the school fees is almost the only indication left of the great truth, that the parent is responsible for his children's education. We have sometimes trembled when we have seen in Board schools directions concerning the doings of the children, which would seem to have had a right to come from parents, but which do in fact come by order of the Board. We have almost feared lest in the Fifth Commandment our boys and girls of the rising generation should be tempted to substitute "Board" for "Father and Mother." Certainly there is great danger in virtue of modern social arrangements lest parents should forget their highest duties to their children, and children cease to honour their parents in the good old-fashioned way. We confess, therefore, that we are jealous of the proposal to take away from the father the proud privilege of paying for his children's schooling, even though it may sometimes cost him an effort to do so. It may be said, of course, that every man does pay indirectly, because he pays according to his means to the taxes of the country, and that therefore the proposal only gives him of his own. The argument is defective, because it ignores the fact that whatever a man may pay indirectly in taxes, there is a conscious effort in finding the pence for the children's schooling, which morally is of great importance. But the argument fails also on other grounds; it assumes that all men have children equally; it asserts that the married man with his five children has no more responsibility than the elderly spinster who lives next door; it supposes that the parents have not a special interest in their children, distinct from that which can be felt by any other person whatever. It may be further urged, that if a man pay for his children while they are in process of education, the pressure comes upon him when he is full of vigor, and most able to bear it, whereas if the payment of pence be commuted for a perpetual tax, the pressure becomes one of a lifelong character, and is not relieved when the powers of earning begin to diminish.

ONE STAR DIFFERETH FROM ANOTHER.—In an interesting review of Dr. Church's Advent Sermons, the London *Guardian* remarks:

"In talking of sermons and preachers, people seem too often to assume that all good preaching must be of one kind, and they criticise sermons because they do not answer to a single type and model which they have in their minds. As a matter of fact, there are as many different types of good sermons as of good poems, or other works of art or imagination. No one who is not very foolish or ignorant will blame Chaucer because he has not Milton's magnificence, or Wordsworth because he has not Pope's epigrammatic neatness. So those critics who will praise no sermon which is not full of original thought or profoundly theological, or interesting and stimulating by its treatment of contemporary social problems, or thickly studded with literary and historical allusions, shut their eyes to the fact that nearly all human knowledge and human acquirements can be pressed into the service of religious teaching, and that therefore every great preacher will have his own method and his own style, and will necessarily lack some gifts which others in their turn will possess. So we have heard the Dean of St. Paul's criticised as a preacher because his sermons do not contain any very startling or original suggestions, and do not open up new views of life and thought. It is quite true, but they are none the worse for this, unless you assume that every preacher ought to contain all excellences in himself. Among preachers of our own day we look to Mozley or Frederic Robertson for originality and suggestiveness, just as we look to Dr. Liddon for clearness of dogmatic statement, or to Bishop Magee for powerful argument and withering scorn. Dean Church is not pre-eminent for any of these qualities, nevertheless he is one of

our greatest living preachers. If we may venture to analyse his power, it seems to us to consist in the impressive solemnity with which he realises and presents to his hearers thoughts which in the mouths of others have become worn and commonplace and therefore useless from mere familiarity. Not only do his sermons as a rule lay no claim to originality, but they derive their chief force from their want of originality. These great old ideas, worn down by being passed from hand to hand, are re-coined and freshly issued by a mind which has the power of adorning and illuminating whatever it receives. One cannot read one of Dean Church's sermons without being greatly persuaded of the awfulness and the reality of the great fundamental principles with which it is his habit to deal. We cannot do better than express this in the Dean's own words in the volume before us. Speaking of the Kingdom of God, he says:—

"A phrase, a doctrine, a discovery, a theory, a deep reaching principle, the watchword and keynote of a whole philosophy, may be in our mouths, may be in our minds, in a neutralised and inactive state, without life, without influence. The dry seed lies on the ground as dead, and abideth alone; it may lie there and perish. But nursed by kindly suns and showers, it may wake up and slowly rise and spread into the mighty tree, the glory and delight of the landscape, ringed with its hundred years of growth. So it is with our ideas and convictions. They may go on, the greatest of them, dead, inert, powerless, fruitless, till they have found their interpreter; till they have found that answering sympathy and intelligence of the soul which sees all that is in them with the inner eye of the mind, which illuminates, unfolds, applies them and animates with them the realities of things."

A COMMENDABLE EXAMPLE.—In the obituary of the late Vicar of Islington, it is stated that for the accommodation of the large numbers of farm servants drawn into his parish by the annual prize show of cattle, Mr. Wilson started what he was accustomed to call "The Shepherd's Service," and which was as much expected by the attendants as the opening of the show on the following day by the public. The service was entirely their own, and no stranger was admitted but by the kindness of the vicar. His hearers were for the most part veritable, brown-faced, horny-handed sons of the soil, and some London clergymen might have been forgiven if, as they looked upon such a congregation, they wondered a single word of their sermon would be understood. Mr. Wilson, however, was quite at home in this scene, and those before him were equally at home with him. "My dear friends," would be the first words which would fall from his lips, and leaning over the little desk which held his Bible and Prayer-Book, he would bid them all a hearty welcome, and express the sincere pleasure it afforded him to meet them once more. Then would follow an abbreviated service, with the General Confession and Thanksgiving, two or three simple hymns, and a brief address, in which the Gospel was simply and feelingly proclaimed, and the service would be over. The shepherds would return to keep watch over their flocks by night, but not, if they remembered the words which their friend had spoken to them, to be unmindful or afraid of the Good Shepherd who gave His life for the sheep.

It has often occurred to us that our clergy might do a good work now and again by seizing such opportunities as the above, the gathering of large crowds in our towns and cities, for holding short services in their churches. At such times all places of amusement and dissipation make special efforts to secure large attendances, why then should not the Church show equal zeal in her business? There must be at every such gathering some few at least to whom an evening service of song with a short address, would be most welcome. The effort is worth making, and if well organized could not fail of a justifying measure of success.