

Parish and Home.

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ASCENSION, Whitsunday, Trinity, this truly is a succession of important festivals. Our Lord rose from the dead; then, fulfilling His promise, He sent the spirit, thus completing the cycle of truth which we last of all celebrate on Trinity Sunday. "Seek those things which are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God," says St. Paul. He is there to help mankind, and as our prayers go up to God through Him we know they cannot be unanswered, for eternal self-sacrificing love is there watching to minister to human need.

WE cannot date a letter without reference to Christ. Those words, eighteen hundred and ninety-three, take us back to the manger in Bethlehem, and we date every event in relation to that great event. The carpenter of Nazareth has triumphed. The world, even while it sneers, bows to His surpassing dignity, and dates its life from His life.

OLE BULL, the great musician, once said: "If I learn to practise on my violin for a day I notice the difference; if for two days my friends notice it; if for a week everybody notices it." Eternal vigilance is the price both of safety and of progress. The man who is too busy to take trouble about and care steadily for little things will never succeed. Our Lord carefully arranged the people in companies and thus made easy his further work of feeding the multitude. Even He took great pains about little things. Shall not we?

"A MAN'S reach must exceed his grasp or what's a heaven for?" wrote Browning. We must not expect too surely to be satisfied here. We may enjoy calm, blessed peace. We may even look up into a cloudless sky, though few of us do; but there must always remain for the child of God a heart-craving that is never entirely satisfied on earth. How could it be otherwise when we are citizens of another country? There could be no faith if there were always fullness. Faith is the reaching out of the thirsty spirit to a God who promises, but withholds for a time the deep, sweet draught that will satisfy.

"WHAT great God is this," groaned the wild Frankish king Clotaire as he lay dying, "that pulls down the strength of the strongest kings." To the rich and the poor, the high and the low, death and sorrow, heart-breaking, desolating sorrow, come in turn. In the school of intensest reality—that of life—we all must learn the same lessons. The select few may learn to lisp a foreign tongue, all must learn the language of human weakness and human need; and from the same Father's love comes sweet solace for the rich and poor who are alike His children.

FOR PARISH AND HOME.

OUR PRAYER BOOK.

I.

I PROPOSE, first, to ask and to answer the question, "Is it right to use a form of prayer?" The question hardly seems necessary in our enlightened age, when all Christians are coming to truer views of the manner and methods of public worship. Churchmen of all schools of thought agree as to the value and place of a Prayer Book in the services of God's House. The Wesleyan Methodists in England use our Prayer Book regularly in their worship. The Presbyterians are beginning to revive John Knox's Book of Common Order, to use forms of prayer for various services, and to adapt to their own conditions our prayers and collects. When I visited Dr. Parker's City Temple, in London, recently, I joined with the immense assembly gathered in that centre of Congregationalism, in our General Confession, in the Lord's Prayer, and the Apostles' Creed. I have often heard the Rev. D. J. Macdonnell, of St. Andrew's, Toronto,

(Pres.), use whole expressions from our Prayer Book in his service of prayer, in his church; and the Te Deum, which is the common property of the Christian world, often forms a part of the service of praise. Still there are some earnest Christians who object to the use of a printed form of prayer. They base their objections upon two main arguments. The first is that forms of prayer necessarily cramp the Spirit. The answer to this objection is not far to seek. When our blessed Lord was upon earth, and worshipped in the synagogue of His people, He followed their customs and, we may well believe, used a form of prayer. We know that He stood up, following the general custom, to read the Scriptures, and based His sermon upon the lesson for the day from the Prophet Isaiah. The service of the Jewish synagogue was not unlike our own. It consisted, Dr. Edersheim has pointed out, of eighteen collects, or short prayers, and two lessons from the sacred Scriptures. Then our Lord furnished His people with a form of prayer—a model prayer—"the Epitome of the Gospel," "the pearl of prayers"—for all ages of the Church and all conditions of Christian activity and life, which, after eighteen centuries, we have not outgrown, and which is as fresh and precious to the oldest saint as to the child learning to lisp it at the mother's knee. It would seem, then, that to urge the objection that forms of prayer cramp the Spirit would be to forget that Christ, who gave a form of prayer, was filled with the Spirit above measure.

The second objection urged is that forms are of necessity cold and lifeless. But this objection starts the question, "How are we to escape form?" The very expression on the part of one as a leader must make what he says a form to all who follow or listen. Is not extempore prayer a form to all who join in it, with the possible exception of the speaker? And does not the frequent use of extempore prayer lead to the throwing of certain wants and wishes into set forms or expressions? We are all agreed in the use of forms for the service of praise. All Christians now join in the same hymns. "Jesus, Lover of my Soul" is familiar to the ears of all who honour the name of Christ in everyland. Is it too much to expect that the time is near when certain prayers will be the common pro-