

efficacy of His holy life and death abide forever—hence day by day the Church can solemnly supplicate that by all the holy mysteries of His Incarnate life the "good Lord would deliver us."

If we Churchmen could but enter into the seasons of the Christian year, feeling their meaning and realizing them as we do the cold of winter and the heat of summer, how holy and blameless before God and man would be our lives. For each time and season of the Church's calendar seems to have a distinctive grace. The Church's atmosphere is charged with it, as it were; the chant and psalms, collect and hymns and lessons also dwell upon it. The collect for Ash Wednesday, for example, beseeches God to "create and make in us new and contrite hearts," as the special fruit of Lent. This is what we mean by the distinctive grace of each season. A study of the collects will make this plain.

Meditation—that exercise recommended by all masters of the interior life—is the best way of entering fully into the seasons of the Prayer Book. By this exercise we contemplate the facts of the Gospel as present realities, models for our imitation, wells of grace whence we draw strength and comfort.

The devout soul will find the observance of the mysteries of the Christian year as they revolve in solemn order across our daily life, a most efficacious way of drawing closer to Jesus Christ, and of seeing Him and listening to His maxims, of learning of Him and of living in His presence as did the Blessed Apostles of old. "Come ye and let us walk in the light of the Lord" as shed abroad in the holy times and season of the Christian year.—*Diocese of Fond du Lac.*

THE BISHOPS AND PULPIT EXCHANGES.

A semi-religious weekly has lately addressed to the bishops of the Church in the United States a letter inviting an expression of opinion as to the matter of an exchange of pulpits with ministers of the various Christian bodies. As was to have been expected, those of the bishops whose leisure and amiability have led them to respond to this inquiry have pointed out the obvious fact, that any such liberty is a matter not within their discretion to authorize, nor of this Church to exercise.

There is very little doubt that this was abundantly well understood beforehand by those who set on foot this interrogation, and whose motive in it, it is not difficult to divine; for the law of the Church is plainly set forth in terms that are neither occult nor obscure. And, as several of the bishops have pointed out, even if it were otherwise, pulpit exchanges are not the road to the reunion of Christendom. If it were, those communions in which such a usage has prevailed, indefinitely, would have given some signs of drawing together. As a matter of fact, there is nothing of the sort. Leaving out the sentimentalisms of "Union Meetings" and the like, the facts of the case, especially in smaller communities where contacts between rival religious bodies are more constant and irritating than elsewhere, do not indicate any smallest diminution in the deep-rooted antagonisms that divide them.

It cannot be otherwise. The reunion of Christendom, if it ever comes, must come round an organic centre. The Historic Episcopate, Scriptural, Apostolic, primitive, perpetual in all the checkered and various life of the Church of God all round the world, offers such a centre. It may be very irritating to Christian people who have not accepted it hitherto, nay, who have treated it with studied disesteem as a something concerning which they were profoundly indifferent, to recognize this; but with

the Church it is, after all, a simple question of fact. She cannot surrender it, because she has no right to surrender it. And meanwhile pulpit exchanges, as a proposition in the interests of the reunion of Christendom, would have very much the same effect as an exchange of commanders among the great ocean steamers that sail in and out of the port of New York would have upon the peace of those European powers that own them. It would be a very pretty piece of international comity; but it would not in the smallest degree promote the safety of the passengers, but rather the contrary, while its effects upon the unification of Europe could only be considered in a humorous aspect.—*The Churchman.*

EVIL SPEAKING.

How easy is it unwittingly to offend in word, and how difficult oftentimes it is to heal the breaches caused thereby. Truly death and life are in the power of the tongue! How often do we put to death the reputation of another by an incredulous look, an unkind remark, a slight detraction, to say nothing of the more pronounced gossip and scandal which too oft disgrace the social hour. "The tongue is a fire, a word of iniquity. . . . set on fire by hell." Sad indeed is it to hear the careless, thoughtless remark made about some Christian worker, whose peculiarities and shortcomings are so discussed as altogether to lose sight of his many excellent qualities and his genuine worth.

And what about the insinuations and bold statements as to the motives of others we so often hear? Are we on a higher spiritual plane than Paul when he declared "I judge not myself?" Then, too, are we always in a position to judge of motive? The intricacies of life and its many complexities call for a wisdom greater than our own, and a love so deep that, seeing the wound, will handle it with gentlest, tenderest touch; that in the place of death, despair, despondency, will pour in words of life, of love, and hope. God teach us more and more the importance of guarding well our speech. The world is tired of preaching without practice, but the silent testimony of "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," as evinced in the life of one of his weakest, humblest followers, will be more potent for good than any amount of preaching divorced from practice.

If our hearts were filled with the Divine love, how differently should we regard the fall of a weak brother. How this Divine love, emanating from us, would be as a wall of fire between the weak one and the sin; or, having fallen, with what loving hands should we stoop down and lift the sinner out of the mire, uphold the faltering steps, and see him well and safely on his way.

What about the poor backslider? Oh! you knew he would never stand. Then what in the name of God's great heart of love did you do to make his footing sure? Let us be careful lest there be found upon us blood-guiltiness!

Then, about that worker we were tempted to regard, from our vantage ground of educational, or of even spiritual, attainment, as beneath us. It is true that he may not exercise the office of teacher to us; but shall we withhold the criticism, the disparaging remark, for the sake of those to whom he is so faithfully dispensing the Bread of life according to his light, lest his influence for good be wholly or in part destroyed?

Then what effect should a knowledge of the shortcoming of those with whom we are in contact have upon us? I believe that herein lies one of our greatest and grandest opportunities of service. If the Lord allows us to perceive the spiritual poverty of another, his weakness or his sin, is it not a call to us to ask and to receive for him the grace that doth so "much

more abound" in place of them? The natural heart "rejoiceth in iniquity," but renewed heart has the privilege of suffering with and for the body of which the Christ of God is Head, that it may be lacking in no good thing. Instead, then of proclaiming upon the housetops the knowledge detrimental to the interest of another, the Lord would have us regard that knowledge as peculiarly sacred, and in the secret of the closet, with door shut, to commit it to His keeping. Are we willing to leave out that "but" we are so fond of using to qualify some favourable remark we hear about another? Are we willing to stand aside; to be less than the least; content to be forgotten and neglected, and find our joy in fitting on the armour of another; in supporting the weak; in passing on those words of comfort which have been to us as the very "balm of Gilead?"

Oh! for the lips that might dispenso the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ to all around. Oh! that He might so richly dwell in us that our "speech" might be not only sometimes but "always with grace," and our presence check the corruption of idle talk and gossip so widely prevalent, even in Christian circles. The love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost will not blind us to other's faults and failings, but over all we shall throw the mantle of charity.

—*The News.*

THE PRAYER-BOOK.

No wonder the Episcopalian loves the service of his Prayer Book. For those to whom its leading thoughts are true, to take part in it must be like taking part in rendering a noble oratorio. The simple, stately phrases move on like solemn music. Observe their orderly procession—first the head bows in quiet confession and then uplifts a bright and shining face; then follows reverent listening as to oracles, Bible oracles, broken by peals of praise; then the firm tread of the "Creed"; and lastly the bowed head again in the long, low, responsive murmurs of the Collects and Litany. Each part a beautiful detail, each richly varied from the next, yet all conspiring to unity. The service is a noble work of art.

And it is what public worship should be, a common service. The book is truly called the Book of Common Prayer. The people make together that "General Confession" with which it opens; the people praise in choral psalms and glorias; the people read the psalms for the day in alternation with the priest; the people voice in unison their Credo; the people respond, petition by petition in the Litany and take each of the Ten Commandments to themselves, and by Amens appropriate the prayers and collects which the priest recites; and here and there the people rise, and here and there they kneel together. The priest, though having much to read, never for a long space reads alone, so closely do the people follow him. Many ages and experiences and modes can enter into this service, and each find that which is its own; the little child in its first church-going will recognize the "Our Father" he has learnt at home, and to the old in years it must be full of clustering associations. And the use of the same book by all Episcopalians widens the communion through all the lands. At the hour of worship all who bear this name are treading the same word paths of thought and praise. Let Sunday come, and whenever he can find his church the traveller is a native and the stranger feels at home.—*Southern Churchman*

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