

had He omitted prayer, and left us to a bare use of the laws of nature according to our own imperfect knowledge of them. In that case He would have withheld needed help, and would have confined us to mere mechanical influences, having but a slight effect on character, whereas now we have larger hope, and come into vital, personal contact, such as gives a more direct impression of Himself. And, by annexing such a condition to His gifts, God brings us into a state honorable to Himself and proper for us; and He produces in us such a state of mind as makes the blessings really bestowed tenfold more valuable—their incidental effect being worth far more than the direct.

God has, therefore, from the beginning made prayer an essential part of His plan in regulating the universe of His intellectual creatures—at least of the human race. Instead of being, as some unbelievers have asserted, an attempt to make the Divine Being change His mind, it thoroughly carries out the Divine intention. Instead of violating law, it complies with that law which is highest, as having its exercise in the highest or moral realm; but still, according to universal analogy, subordinating the lower laws of lower realms. In the same way we see chemical law overruling mechanical law, and vital law overruling both chemical and mechanical ones, and the law of the moral universe overruling that of the physical universe. When we talk of God's laws or of His plan in governing the universe, we must not pause at the entrance of His system, or busy ourselves merely with the scaffolding of His structure. The material universe is only a platform and instrumental agency for the exercise of the spiritual. And so, as God has made gravity a law in one realm, He has made prayer a law in a higher realm, and it is even greater folly to ignore the latter than the former. It is no more true that God is a Creator of worlds than that He is a Hearer of prayer. Even Tennyson says:—

“More things are wrought by prayer  
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore let thy voice  
Rise like a fountain for me, night and day;  
For what are men better than sheep or goats,  
That nourish a blind life within the brain,  
If knowing God they lift not hands of prayer,  
Both for themselves and those who call them 'friends'!  
For so the whole round earth is every way  
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.”

#### THE ROGATION DAYS.

THE Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday before Holy Thursday have for ages been used in the Church as days of prayer for special objects, and their observance this year is attracting attention on account of the adoption, by the Convocation of Canterbury, of the recommendation of a Committee of the Lambeth Conference that Rogation Tuesday should be kept as a day of prayer for the Church Foreign Missions. The ancient custom of keeping these days as a season of prayer for God's blessing upon the crops, and deliverance from the scourge of war, famine and pestilence, is observed in many parishes in England by saying the Litany, as well as special collects, and psalms 103 and 104; and this custom has not been lost sight of in the service issued by Convocation for the Day, for Foreign Missions. With the view of assigning subjects for prayer to the other two Rogation days, it has been suggested that Rogation Monday should be given up to the primary object of the season, asking a blessing upon the crops, and, what is now so necessary, deliverance from war; and Rogation Wednesday to an object closely connected with Foreign Missions, namely Home Missions, in the supply of clergy. In churches where there are frequent

daily services, which is rarely the case in Canada, these days would, it is submitted, be duly observed by saying the Litany, and asking the prayers of the congregation at the other services. Such a use of the Rogation season would be a fit preparation for Ascension Day, and tend, it is believed, to a better observance of that Great Festival.

#### ASCENSION DAY.

“IN the Ascension,” says a writer of old time, “is consummated the work of the Incarnation, and the merit of the passion, and the reward of Glorification.” The work of Christ was not completed by His birth, or temptation, or sorrowful life, or death, or resurrection; it was necessary for the perfect fulfilment of His task that He should ascend into heaven, and sit at the right hand of His Father, and, living, ever plead for those for whom He died. And there is yet another reason for our Lord's Ascension to heaven. It was *His home*. It was His Father's house, the dwelling of the saints and angels whom he loved. This was the great attractive power felt in His human nature which drew the Saviour up to heaven. He *was going home*. We all know this feeling. For all of us there is “no place like home,” be it “never so homely.” It was this feeling which caused Hadad to sigh for the brown hills of Moab among the painted palaces of Egypt. It was this feeling which made Israel, beside the waters of Babylon, weep when they remembered Sion. How many an exile in a foreign land, though surrounded by the fairest scenes of nature, has yearned fondly toward some humble spot far away, some barren hillside or dull village, which with all its rudeness and simplicity was dear to him because it was his *home*! How many a one has taken a long and weary journey to look with sad, loving eyes on a place which knows him no more, but which was home to him once! Is not that heaven, whither our dear Lord has ascended, *our true home*? Is there not something to draw us up thither? Is there not the love of some little child, not lost, but gone before—is there not the love of some gentle mother, some brave father, or faithful wife—above all, is there not the love of Jesus to draw us heavenward, and to make us feel that here we have no continuing city, but that we seek one to come.

#### SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING THE OBSERVANCE OF ASCENSION DAY.

THIS Association was founded June, 1869, with the sanction of the (then) Archbishops, many of the Bishops, and other influential persons. Its object was to obtain the general recognition of Ascension Day as one of the great Holy Days of the Church, and to promote its due observance. Several years of activity have been rewarded with a large measure of success. But, although a great improvement is noticeable during the last few years, in the manner in which this Holy Day is observed, it is observable that much still remains to be done. It is felt that this is no party question. Ascension Day, as one of the days appointed to commemorate the chief events in the life of our Lord, ought to have the same general recognition as Good Friday or Christmas Day. It is also justly considered that the services on so holy a day can hardly be considered adequate, unless provision is made for the highest act of Christian worship. The mind of the Church being so plainly shown by special collect, epistle and gospel, and proper preface as well as proper psalms and lessons, as a mid-day cele-

bration of the Holy Communion could not be attended by business persons, it is also urged by the Association that many Church people would be thankful if the clergy would provide a celebration at an early hour.

#### CONFESSING CHRIST.

PROFESSING Christ is not confessing him: for to profess Christ is one thing—to confess Christ is another. Confession is a living testimony for Christ, in a time when religion suffers: profession may be only a lifeless formality, in a time when religion prospers. To confess Christ, is to choose his ways, and own them. To profess Christ, is to plead for his ways, and yet live beside them. Profession may form a feigned love to the ways of Christ; but confession is from a rooted love to the Person of Christ. To profess Christ, is to own him when none deny him; to confess Christ, is to plead for him, and suffer for him, when others oppose him. Hypocrites may be professors; but the martyrs are the true confessors. Confession is a swimming against the stream. Now many may swim with the stream, like the dead fish, that cannot swim against the stream, as a living fish. Many may profess Christ that cannot confess Christ; and so, notwithstanding their profession, yet are but almost Christians.

#### THE CATHOLICITY OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH.

LADY asked Keble to state why he believed the catholicity of the English Church. In his answer he says: The English Church has the right rule of Faith, the true Creed grounded on that rule, the true sacraments ensured by Apostolical Succession. If she is not in outward communion with other Churches, no more are they in communion with each other nor with us, and it is just begging the question to say, Greece or England must be wrong, because outwardly cut off from Rome. Greece or England has just as much right to say, Rome is wrong, because outwardly cut off from us..... When one comes and tells me that my mother, who has been God's instrument for feeding me all my life long unto this day, is really not my mother, and that I must seek my true mother elsewhere, how can I, how dare I, be content with less than overwhelming proof? And how can I be reasonably blamed if I decline entering into the argument at all, and say, “Please God, I will abide by my old, my tried parent, the mother of my childhood and youth, and try by His grace to do my best under her guidance.”

#### DIOCESE OF ALGOMA.

(MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PROVINCE OF CANADA.)

CONTRIBUTIONS towards the maintenance of the clergy in the diocese of Algoma, and also for carrying on the work of the Indian schools at the Sault Ste. Marie, are much needed just now. The Bishop of Algoma has ten clergymen labouring in different parts of that mission field, all of whom are dependent for the chief part of their stipends upon grants from the Algoma Diocesan fund, which in its turn is dependent upon the voluntary contributions of church members in Canada. The settlers are poor, and have as much as they can do in the erection of churches and parsonages. They show themselves anxious to be helpful, but money is scarce amongst them. There are now in Algoma fifteen churches clear of debt, and fourteen log church