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The Calendar

Fourth Sunday in Lent.

This is Mid-Lent Sunday, and it was formerly called *Dies Rejectionis*, or "The Day of Refreshment." It also bore the name of "Mothering Sunday." Various reasons are given for these titles. The former is pretty certainly associated with the severity and discipline of Lent, for there was an old practice of feasting on this day midway through the Lenten fast. Special cakes are still made at this season in parts of the North of England. The Gospel may also have some reference to this idea of spiritual refreshment. The reason for "Mothering Sunday" is more doubtful. Some associate it with the custom of visiting the Mother Church of the Diocese with offerings on this day, while others connect it with the custom in some parts of England for apprentices and servants living away from home to visit their parents on this day and to take a present in the form of a "mothering cake."

The Collect.—Taken from the Sarum Missal, it prays that, while we acknowledge our deserts in regard to punishment, we ask to be relieved or "refreshed" by the Divine grace. The earlier form from 1549 to 1662 was "are worthily punished," but in 1662 it was changed to the present phrase, "worthily deserve to be punished," thereby rendering the prayer more generally suitable.

The Epistle.—Selected from Galatians 4: 21-31, it puts in contrast the bondage of the old covenant of the law with the liberty of the new covenant of the Gospel. The lesson is appropriate to Lent in its warning against that spirit of mere legalism, which is a constant, perhaps inevitable, danger to true spiritual living.

The Gospel.—Deals with our Lord's great miracle, the only one found in all four Gospels, symbolizing Christ as the Bread of Life. Again, the thought of "refreshment" seems to be emphasized, and our Lord's discourses at Capernaum based on this miracle contain the assurance that those who come to Him shall "never hunger" (John 6:35).

Hymns from the Book of Common Praise, compiled by Dr. Albert Ham, F.R.C.O., Organist and Director of the Choir of St. James' Cathedral, Toronto.

Fourth Sunday in Lent. (April 2nd.)

Holy Communion: 232, 253, 245, 250.
Processional: 386, 397, 786, 787.
General: 415, 502, 634, 782.
Children: 793, 711, 719, 732.
Offertory: 7, 107, 434, 436.

The Outlook

Alone with God.

Lent is a time specially intended to recall to our notice the importance of meditation, and it is particularly important in these days of hurry and bustle to remember the value of quietness and communion with God. Doctors say that one of the most important means towards proper health is found in the occasional practice of resting-times—times when we may be said to adjust ourselves, with minds withdrawn from ordinary life and work and opportunity given for definite and deliberate tranquility. We are counselled to put away all excitement and agitation, to banish worry, to welcome pleasant thoughts and give them all possible hospitality. If this is true, as it is, of the individual life, much more should we cultivate the same spirit in connection with our opportunities of public worship. Tennyson has said that "Solitude is the mother country of the strong," and there can be very little doubt that for vigor of mind, strength of purpose, and determination of will in relation to God, times of meditation with our Bible and prayer afford one of the most valuable, if not the most valuable, methods of becoming "strong in the Lord." It is long since the word of the prophet first came, but it is as true to-day as ever: "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength."

The English National Mission.

The plans made by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York for the holding of a great National Mission towards the end of this year have created a great deal of interest, and it would seem that an effort on a very large scale is to be attempted in order that the entire country may be appealed to at once. There is, however, one feature in connection with the subject that is causing a good deal of concern. The Archbishops in their letter say that there is good reason to hope that the leaders of other religious communions will make arrangements in their own way "for an independent effort kindred to our own." This thought of "independent effort" is decidedly disappointing, especially in view of the name, "National Mission." As one writer has well said: "Imagine Australia or New Zealand or Canada or South Africa making an 'independent effort' in connection with the present war!" Is it not, therefore, pathetic and deplorable that the Christian Church, in waging a spiritual war, has to be inferior to the Empire? We are so united as an Empire and so united with our Allies that we have declined to make a separate peace, and yet in the face of all this we are reminded once again of the weakness of the Christian Church by the idea of an "independent effort." It is disappointing to all those who desire to see the whole Church come forward and bearing testimony for God in the face of evils all around. We suppose it is too much to expect that anything in the way of an united appeal can be made, though we are perfectly certain that it would impress the nation and Empire as nothing else could or would. Meanwhile, those who pray and strive for unity cannot but feel sad at heart to realize what golden opportunities are being lost because God's people are not "all one."

The Renaissance of Heroism.

This is the title of a striking article contrasting the response of the people evoked by the war and the methods of the Christian

Church. It is shown that the war has produced a remarkable renaissance of heroism in what has been called "a nation of shopkeepers." Everything has been set aside for the purpose of showing, as never before, the heroic and the adventurous in the hearts and lives of men. And yet, as the same time, it is pointed out that of recent years the Church of Christ has sacrificed very much to the gospel of happiness. We have spoken of "pleasant Sunday afternoons" and "popular services," and we have emphasized the billiard-room and the social club. In a word, we have done our very best to make things as easy as possible for people in connection with religion. No wonder that men are not concerned about their sins or about redemption! No wonder that our sermons and addresses are listened to with very little interest, because we have not appealed to men as soldiers, as warriors, and have not demanded the strenuousness that our Lord emphasized when He spoke of discipleship! The Apostles are equally fond of such expressions as "enduring hardness," " manifold temptations," "suffering affliction with the people of God." Perhaps the result of this war will be to show men that there is no need to turn away from Christ to Emerson, Carlyle and others, because in and through the Gospel of the crucified Saviour there will be every opportunity of showing and proving to the world the nobility, manliness, strength and endurance of the true Christian disciple.

Does the Stage Help Morality?

From time to time the question is raised as to whether the theatre is a power for good. Quite recently the dramatic critic of one of the leading papers in America has been speaking on this subject, and he does not hesitate to ridicule the pretence of the stage to teach morality. He declines to believe that the stage methods of "getting good quick" after prolonged indulgence in sin are in line with any genuine ethics, and he concludes a very strong and satirical article with a splendid testimony to Christianity in these words:—

"Let us admit that the theatre as a forum of morals is a joke, convincing nobody who is not already convinced. An honest sermon by an honest expounder of the Word is worth as a moral catholicon all the happy endings that ever turned any play into a lie. Let us remember the belief of Sir Arthur Pinero, the wisest of playwrights, that the exhibition of the most miserable of his transgressing heroines never deterred a woman from doing what her passion told her to do."

Once again it will be seen that those who cannot see their way to accept the truth that the stage is a power for good are enabled to produce a witness whose knowledge and freedom from prejudice ought to command the attention of all.

The Danger of Spies.

In the current number of "The Greater Britain Messenger," the organ of the Colonial and Continental Church Society, a letter appears from one of the Chaplains now at Calais and we cannot do better than reproduce part of it:

I had an interview with the Head Censor yesterday. He said "I have no right to pass anything for publication." Things which appear harmless in a private letter may do serious harm when published. This has occurred repeatedly. For instance, a soldier wrote a letter to his friends which was passed by the Censor. His friends published it in the local newspaper. The letter contained the apparently harmless

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