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Lessons for Sundays and Holy Days.

March 7th.—FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT.

E. Morning.—Gen. 19, v. 12 to 30. Mark 7, v. 24, to 8, v. 10.
Evening.—Gen. 22, to v. 23. Rom. 15.

APPROPRIATE HYMNS for First and Second Sundays in Lent, compiled by Mr. F. Gatward, organist and choir-master of St. Luke's Cathedral, Halifax, N.S. The numbers are taken from H. A. & M., but many of which are found in other hymnals:

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT.

Holy Communion: 318, 324, 355, 472.
Processional: 92, 107, 231, 465.
Offertory: 6, 91, 252, 492.
Children's Hymns: 254, 332, 473, 569.
General Hymns: 84, 88, 94, 198, 354, 490.

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT.

Holy Communion: 279, 309, 312, 552.
Processional: 100, 109, 265, 465.
Offertory: 85, 95, 256, 528.
Children's Hymns: 107, 280, 334, 342.
General Hymns: 8, 87, 90, 108, 183, 263.

LENT.*

It is a remarkable fact that, although the season of Lent is of uncertain origin, all Churchmen, of whatever school, are in almost entire agreement as to its importance in the Christian year. Some may hold it in reverence because of its antiquity, others because of its connection with the fast of the God-man, whilst others again may simply reckon it to be a great benefit to have a quiet season, with fewer worldly distractions, which they can give to closer meditation, reading and prayer. Whatever the reason may be, the result is much the same, and in this we rejoice. Originally it would appear that the fast lasted forty hours; but this period was gradually enlarged, in different

* The Outlines on the Epistles will be continued next week, so that each may appear about ten days before the Sunday to which it refers.

ways in different places, until the present method of observance was finally established about the fourth century, so that at last from the first Sunday in Lent to Easter Eve there were 36 days of abstinence, of course not reckoning the Sundays, which are never Fast days. The four days from Ash Wednesday seem to have been added, in the West, about the ninth century, although the forty days seem to have been observed much earlier in the East. In this brief note we do not propose to enter further into the history or the general significance of the season, but rather to ask what use we may ourselves make of it. How shall it be a reality and a benefit to us? To answer this question rightly we should ask ourselves, what we mean by our life. What is our theory, our ideal? What are we meaning and endeavouring to realize? Well! to be Christians, we should say—to be like Christ, to be "imitators of God as dear children," to "walk in love," to "live soberly, righteously and godly," to follow Christ "in lowliness, patience and charity." Very simple, very obvious. Then let us put some of these simple phrases before us, and meditate upon them, and ask whether they are realities for us. Now, undoubtedly for some of us they are realities. Possibly for some readers of these lines they may not be so. To these latter, then, it is clear that there becomes a serious need to reconsider their position. They must serve God or Mammon—Christ or the world: these are the only alternatives. Might not Lent be a good time for considering whether the world is quite worth serving? With regard to the other class, again, they have not already attained, nor are as yet perfect. Many shadows still hang about them. They do not walk altogether in the light of the Divine countenance. May not, then, this season be to them a time of self-examination and of discipline? What should they do? This at least: Compare their ideal of life with that of Christ. Are they living for the ends that He lived for? Could they, in any moderate degree, apply to themselves the words which He spake of Himself—as to being about His Father's business, as to His having come to do His Father's will and work, as to finding His meat to do the will of the Father? And then, could they further believe that they are using the same means to realize these ideas? Are their lives lived in fellowship with God? Do they exercise watchfulness and self-denial? Do they think habitually of doing good to others? Do they say as He said, "I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day?" Well, at any rate, these are serious considerations to meditate in this season of Lent. In order to carry them out, let us make some plan for this sacred season—as to the services we shall attend, as to the self-denial which we shall exercise, as to the time to be given to special self-examination and prayer and meditation; and having carefully made our plan, let us stick to it as closely as we can—and then Lent will not pass away without leaving a blessing behind.

RELIGIOUS EVOLUTION.

At this time of day it must strike one as very curious that the publication of the Darwinian Theory of Evolution produced a kind of panic among a certain class of religious people. The faith was being undermined, it was said, by this new doctrine. The one or the other must be

abandoned, it was said. These terrors are, of course, very irrational, and seem to show that men are more in love with their own opinions than with truth. If we really love truth, we may be sure that no weapon formed against it can ultimately prosper. No doubt, unstable minds may be hurt, and other weak people may be shaken; and it is the business of the strong to care for the weak. But the history of Darwinism may teach us not to be so much upset by any novel theories which may seem inconsistent with other doctrines which we hold. As a matter of simple fact, we are all evolutionists now, although not all Darwinians; and what is more, we find, like the Bourgeois Gentilhomme in Moliere, who had been all his life speaking prose without knowing it, that we were always evolutionists. For example, we always believed that our Lord meant exactly what He said when He told His disciples that the Comforter would carry on the teaching which He had begun. And we always knew that there was progress and development in the divine revelation recorded in the Old Testament. Mr. Goldwin Smith seems to think that believers in Christianity regarded every part of the Old Testament as equally adapted for their instruction in doctrine and practice; but theologians know better. We have been led to these remarks by an excellent article on the "Development of Doctrine in the Pre-Christian Church," in "Christian Literature" for January, written by a man who is always worth listening to, Mr. Low, of Almonte. Mr. Low thinks as well as writes, and he gives us here a very excellent summary of the subject of pre-Christian Development which will probably be, to a large extent, new to some of our readers. Mr. Low says truly that the theory of development is much more applicable to the Church of the old dispensation and to the pre-Christian revelations of God to His chosen people; and he says, with truth, that this is a consideration which should always be borne in mind in our study of the Old Testament. And, although, he says, the "popular superstition," which Mr. Goldwin Smith seems to think the normal Christian belief, holds that "the Old Testament is one book, given at one time, and as much the product of one generation as the New Testament," yet the "Higher Criticism," whatever its other faults may be, has, at least, the merit of compelling us to take a more rational view of the historical and doctrinal significance of the Old Testament. There can be no doubt of the truth of Mr. Low's remark, that "the Old Testament is made ever so much clearer, and is ever so much more valuable, and is freed from ever so many stumbling blocks to the faith, if we bear in mind that it was a work of slow growth during fifteen hundred years, the accumulation of the records of the several revelations of God to His chosen people. We are beginning to realize the fact, he goes on, "that the ideas of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, or even of Moses and Joshua, must have been far more elementary than those of the later prophets. The development of doctrine in the pre-Christian Church must have been commensurate with the development of men's idea of God." Of course, these opinions are not new. They were held explicitly by all the more careful and profound thinkers of early times, and implicitly by a good many who could not have given clear utterance to the opinions which were