

Dominion Churchman.

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TENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Church's special teaching for this day embraces, as usual, a large variety of instruction in doctrinal matters, as well as a great deal of history and historical allusion, of a deeply interesting character. The first Lesson for Mattins gives a warning to the statesman against adopting the erroneous and impolitic maxims of government recommended by the Counsellors of Rehoboam; who, perhaps, for the purpose of still further increasing the splendor of the throne on which Solomon had sat, advised a course which had the effect of dividing the kingdom into two, of causing much blood to be shed, and continual war to be carried on for several generations, between Israel and Judah. It is remarkable that this king is, perhaps, the only one of the ancient Israelitish kings of whom a portrait, made in his own days, is still extant. The event, narrated 1 Kings xiv. 25-28, which took place in the fifth year of Rehoboam's reign, has been found sculptured in deathless lines on the colossal monuments of Thebes, in Upper Egypt. Thirty conquered princes are represented on the walls of Karnak, being dragged, by Shishak, to the feet of the Theban Trinity. One of them has a very peculiar Jewish physiognomy, and underneath him, written in hieroglyphics, the words "King of the Jews."

We have also an account of the origin of that singular iniquity wherewith Jeroboam made Israel to sin—not by worshipping false divinities, but by instituting a new worship of the true God, under the form of the golden calves, in Bethel and in Dan, in order to prevent the people of Israel from being brought back again to Rehoboam, if they should go up to Jerusalem to worship. This sin became so great a snare to the house of Israel that it continually increased year after year, until it reached so fearful an amount of wickedness that God caused the ten tribes to be carried away captive into the land of Assyria, from whence they have never returned, up to the present time.

In one of the Scripture Lessons for this day, 1. Kings xvii., the most extraordinary of all the Old Testament worthies is brought before us. He bursts suddenly upon us as Elijah, the Tishbite. His origin is veiled from our sight, and nothing now is known of it except that he appears by that name, and is supposed to have been called so from the town of Thisbe, of Naphtali, mentioned Tobit i. 2. The termination of his wonderful career on earth is equally

obsured by the splendor of the glory into which he was received, having been taken up into the Kingdom of Heaven by the miraculous agency of a fiery chariot, which suddenly appeared on earth and parted asunder the two prophets, Elijah and Elisha, as they talked together. The wonderful and decidedly supernatural character of nearly the whole of the life of this great witness for truth in an ungodly age, was such as to have led many people to suppose that he was an incarnate angel; and of so mysterious a character were the events of his life that St. James found it necessary to state expressly that "he was a man subject to like passions as we are." There have not, however, been wanting those who think that even this expression would be compatible with the supposition that Elijah was the incarnation of a pure spirit from the realms above. We must confess that we see no way of reconciling such an opinion with the expression of St. James.

The Collect for the day, simple and brief as it is, indicates the answer to be given to all objections, from the infidel Pain, or from the more refined unbelievers in the present day, against the Christian's use of prayer. Holy Scripture never gives us the slightest reason to suppose that we have the right to pray except in submission to the Divine Counsels; and the highest and noblest model we could take would be in perfect agreement with the prayer of our Blessed Lord when he besought, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt."

The Epistle points out, what is more fully expressed in the Gospel, the necessity of cultivating our spiritual privileges, and improving them while they continue to be vouchsafed to us.

The presence of Christ as the Messiah, the anointed of God, the Saviour, and the dispenser of the Holy Spirit, was not realized by the men of the generation to whom He came; and the terrible punishment which was to befall the whole race was keenly felt by the Saviour in the scene depicted in the Gospel of the Communion office for this Sunday. In his last journey to Jerusalem, as He approached the city, to make his triumphant entry, surrounded by thousands upon thousands of those who were ready to hail Him as a triumphant temporal deliverer, the anguish of His soul was stirred within Him; and He wept over the city, while He exclaimed—"O that thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes." That was the day of their visitation. Christ looked upon the miseries of Judea and Jerusalem in prospect. To us they are an historic reality. And when we think of the destruction of Jerusalem, the expulsion of her inhabitants under circumstances of the

most cruel barbarism, the proud mockery of her enemies, and the persecutions of those who have borne a name once venerated, but afterwards hated and despised, we feel how pathetic and how full of the deepest thought is the exclamation—"O that thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace." And not the Jews only, but also the people among whom the primitive churches were planted afford remarkable instances of the result of failing to recognize Christ's presence in His Church, and to improve the day of their visitation. And therefore the solemn admonition,—“Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God—on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in His goodness, otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.” Of this we have the most affecting examples. Where are the churches to whom St. Paul addressed his epistles? Corinth, Ephesus, Colosse, Phillippi, Thessalonica? They had their day, and for a time they improved it; but they grew weary of well-doing, and now, such as remain at all, exist only as so many pictures of spiritual decay. If St. Paul could sigh amidst his happiness in Heaven, he would sigh in tracing the contrast between the glorious monuments which his sacred zeal had left in those places, and the desolations of God's judgments, the wastes of spiritual death now to be found in the same countries. Those churches, once so distinguished by faith and love, that when absent from them in body, he was present with them in spirit, rejoicing and beholding their order and the steadfastness of their faith in Christ, are now like the desert heath, which never sees when good cometh. They are the fearful monuments which God has set up to warn us by the fate of the Gentile Church, as well as by that of the Jews, that we neglect not the day of our visitation.

Could we unveil the mournful realities of the invisible world, many comments on this affecting passage would be found. There are the inhabitants of the old world on whom the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah—but who were disobedient. No preacher of righteousness now appears to declare the counsel of God. There are the rebellious Jews, to whom God sent His prophets, rising early and sending. Now there is no Elijah, no Isaiah, no Jeremiah there. There are the men who, when the Son came, said,—“This is the heir; come let us kill him;” and who treated the servants as they had treated the master. And there are the multitudes who have talked about the more convenient season, but who have trifled away all the means and opportunities of grace; many who never made salvation a serious concern, and took no steps to secure it. And there are the many who were pleased to compare the merits and demerits of God's