

[Sep. 30, 1886.]

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LESSONS for SUNDAYS and HOLY-DAYS.

OCTOBER 3rd—15th SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.
Morning—2 Kings xviii. Ephesians iv. to 25.
Evening—2 Kings xix. or xxiii. to 31. Luke vi. to 20.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 1886.

THE TRUE MESSAGE OF THE PULPIT.—The Bishop of Argyle in a recent pastoral says: "I am quite certain that in our pulpit the Name of Jesus is far too seldom heard, and His glorious Gospel is far too seldom preached. It is impossible to go about, from place to place, without coming to this conclusion.

"We read in the Holy Scriptures how, when Jesus conversed with His two disciples on the way to Emmaus, their hearts burned within them. Is it not possible, my brethren, that there are Christian hearts now a-days which burn, not with love and joy, but rather with indignation, when sermons are preached, eloquent perhaps, and powerful, and coming from the lips of men who are sound in the faith, but who nevertheless are content to give their hearers, mere ethics, Old Testament history, or moral reflections, instead of the Gospel of our Crucified, Risen and Ascended Jesus.

"The frequent absence of Christian doctrine from Christian pulpits is to me a mystery hard to be understood. Eloquence is a rare gift, which few possess. Learning requires labour, which many through fault or misfortune have not bestowed. But that there should be any preachers, who sincerely believe that God has become man, and has suffered death upon the cross, and who yet do not make the Incarnation, and Redemption their constant themes, is truly marvellous. It is easy to understand pastoral neglect. This usually arises from that sloth to which we are all so prone. It is easy to account for carelessness in matters of ritual, or irreverence at the altar, among those who discern not the Lord's Body in His Blessed Sacrament. But how it comes to pass that there are many who know—who believe in, and who even love our Lord Jesus Christ, and yet who do not often preach His Divine Person and His Redeeming Work, it is hard indeed to explain. Yet such, I fear, is the case, and so long as this fact remains, many who are hungering for Him Who is the Bread of Life, will go away from us unsatisfied, or it may be repelled. For why is it that certain religious organizations which have a purely human origin, and certain preachers who can show no commis-

sion from our Lord, sometimes seem, at any rate, more blest in their efforts to win souls than we are? Is it not because, when they succeed, they do so through the setting forth of Him in Whom alone the heart of man can find rest? The Lord has said, "Them that honour Me, I will honour;" and this promise, I believe, is constantly finding its fulfilment, in the case even of those who, in weakness, in ignorance; yes, and perhaps even in conjunction with error, teach and preach Jesus Christ, true God and true man, as the one and only Saviour of lost souls."

A DEIST ON SACERDOTALISM.—Truly, as we must honour Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar, so also must we honour Him in our sermons. At the altar let us adore Him. In the pulpit let us preach Him. There is, believe me, ignorance concerning the Person and Work of Jesus Christ among all classes of society. Such is the weakness of the human heart, and such is the power of the devil, that unless we are often reminded of Jesus and his Gospel, we grow cold towards Him, and forgetful as to His Redeeming Love.

Moreover, let us bear in mind that all true Church doctrine, whether as to the ministry, or as to the Sacraments, has its foundation in the Gospel—that is, in the Person and Work of our Divine Redeemer. We may learn this even from the words of an enemy—a well-known London preacher, once a clergyman of the Church of England, though now suspended from the ministry. He has recently been lecturing about what he calls "our own Protestant English Church," and concerning the dangers arising to her from "Sacerdotalism." These are his words—full of blasphemy, yet full also of truth. Speaking of the commission given by our Divine Lord to His Apostles—"Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained,"—he says: "This is the fiction on which the whole claim of Sacerdotalism is founded, having for its basis the assumption that Christ was God, and that He had power to exercise and to impart this Divine authority over all men."

Further on he adds—"I am content to fight with neither small nor great, save only with the King Himself. It is part of my life's work to dethrone Jesus from His assumed authority over men, and to make people see for themselves that He was not and could not be God. And so soon as they see this, the power of Sacerdotalism vanishes. It cannot live an hour after this discovery." But we are yet a long way off this sensible and truthful view. Hundreds and thousands of good Protestants are, even still, playing into the hands of the Sacerdotalists, by maintaining the Divine Nature and authority of Christ, and (by) calling Him their Lord and their God.

Let us ever remember, then, that all teaching as to the Priesthood and as to the Sacraments must be based upon the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. If, therefore, we would have our people to regard with due honour the Priestly office, let us lead them first to know, to love and to adore, with all their hearts, the Great High Priest upon His throne, our Lord Jesus Christ, Who lives and reigns with Father and the Holy Spirit, in the glory of the Eternal Trinity, One God for ever and ever. He, as man, has received all power in heaven and earth, and He is thus the Fountain of all authority in His Mystical Body, which is the Church. In short, let us see to it, that the preaching of Christ's Gospel, and faith in His Name, are always the foundation upon which we build all our ecclesiastical superstructure.

THE EDUCATIONAL POLICY OF ROME.—The New York Churchman remarks that it is the deliberate policy of the Church of Rome to keep the masses

of her people in a state of ignorance, is a logical inference from observed facts. The reasons which support such a policy, are easily discoverable by any one who studies her system of theology and morals. When those reasons are stated by a Protestant observer, they are at once disavowed by Romish controversialists as being the figments of Protestant prejudice. It is of interest, therefore, to consider the policy which they themselves avow in the matter of keeping the masses ignorant, and the reasons which they publish in support of it. The following passage in the Dublin Review may be fairly taken as such a statement of the position of the Church of Rome as her casuists are willing to profound and defend among Protestants: "We are far from meaning," says the writer, "that ignorance is the Catholic youth's best preservative against intellectual danger; but it is a very powerful one, nevertheless, and those who deny this are but inventing a theory in the very teeth of manifest facts. A Catholic destitute of intellectual tastes, whether in a higher or a lower rank, may, probably enough, be tempted to idleness, frivolity, gambling, sensuality, but in none but the very rarest cases will he be tempted to that which (in the Catholic view) is an immeasurably greater calamity than any of these or all put together, viz., deliberate doubt on the truth of his religion. It is simply undeniable, we say, that the absence of higher education is a powerful preservative against apostasy, and those who watch over souls will reasonably refuse to bear a part in withdrawing that preservative. The significance of this utterance lies in the fact that it is in harmony with the policy actually pursued wherever the Church of Rome has power to do her will. It is not worth while to inquire whether it is "official" or "authoritative," it has the "authority" of the practice of the whole Roman obedience behind it, and is a cautious and sober statement of the reasons, or the best of the reasons, which underlie that practice.

THE CHURCH OF ROME AT WAR WITH SOCIAL ORDER.

—The New York Churchman continues: "It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the questions which are brought forward in the preceding paragraph. From the standpoint of the mere civilian, it is easy to see that principles are here avowed which are subversive of all order; while from the religious and spiritual point of view those principles are seen to be in direct conflict with the highest truth. So admit that exposure to "idleness, frivolity, gambling, sensuality," is to be condoned or justified for the sake of an alleged more undisturbed loyalty to "religion," is to surrender civil and social order altogether; for it is here implied that a man may be guilty of all these, and still be true to his "religion," which latter is declared to be "immeasurably" more important than rightness and decency of living. Looked at, therefore, simple as a matter of civil and social economy, the avowal of the principles here set forth is nothing less than a declaration of war upon civil society. If ignorance, with its consequent idleness and profligacy, are not only matters of small concern to the Church of Rome in comparison with loyalty to "religion," but are actually to be encouraged and perpetuated because they are "preservative" of that loyalty, then it cannot be denied that the Church of Rome is in actual conflict with the maintenance of civil and social order. The facts indicate the correctness of this conclusion. The influence of Romanism is not favorable to good citizenship anywhere. It fosters crime and encourages profligacy. Not only as the result of the ignorance which it allows, but still more as the result of distinction which it makes between loyalty to religion and righteousness of conduct, it undermines the very foundations of civil and social order. It is perfectly logical, therefore, that four-fifths of the profligacy and disorder of our larger cities should be directly chargeable to the fault of the Church of Rome.