

Oct. 14, 1886.

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LESSONS for SUNDAYS and HOLY-DAYS.

OCTOBER 17th—17th SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.
Morning—Jeremiah v. 1 Thessalonians ii.
Evening—Jeremiah xxii; or xxv. Luke xiii. to 18.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 14, 1886.

The Rev. W. H. Wadleigh is the only gentleman travelling authorized to collect subscriptions for the "Dominion Churchman."

CHRISTIAN LIFE NOT A LATENT FORCE.—A great many Christians claim that there is a living force in them; but when you look you never see it; it is never disclosed. If you paint a Christian man with the eagle in him, the symbol of St. John, the eagle must be seen; it is not a part that hides; and if a man has to go out into life carrying the impress of the divine nature, he has to go out with that nature disclosed so that it shall have force.

Now, the law of force is fervency, intensity. The truth of the Bible cannot be received through any other agency than this. No man can work with any great competency except by strong feeling; but work aside, conceptions of truth cannot come. There are many things which men can discern when they are in a state of exaltation, but which they never can see in any lower state.

There have been morning when from the conditions of life or the conjunctions of circumstances, you have felt yourselves lifted up into a clearer air, and have been nerved with a power such as does not belong to your ordinary days; and in the hours of such luminous exaltation you have perceived truths, and higher relations of truth; you have had an outlook upon human life; you have received an inspiration such as you have never had at any other time; you have mourned because you have lost it and could not find it again; and you have said, "If I could carry that state of mind which I had yesterday with me I would be victorious over life."

Now, there are gradations of sensibility. The lowest state of mind is quiescence. The second state of sensibility is that which simply makes you receptive. You are like a slate, which does nothing for itself, but on which another hand can write; and men are largely in that state in respect

to the highest forms of social and moral truth—that is, they are simply receptive; but true life is manifested by activity and the exercise of power over others.

NONCONFORMISTS AND THE POOR.—In a description of the evident presence of Messianic times, with their fruitful spiritual results, which is given by our Lord, there occurs the familiar words, "the poor have the gospel preached to them." In deep contrast to the exclusiveness of Pagan philosophy, the extension of the blessings of sacred knowledge to the humblest classes, was a prominent feature of the first Christian age, and the continuation of this feature, in part determines the validity of claims to Apostolic succession; of claims, that is to walking in the steps of the teaching and practice of the Apostles, which is the only succession that is really to be taken account of—not lineal but doctrinal, nor merely legal and technical, but moral and spiritual. The Apostolic Churches must always be those that best provide for the wants of the poor, and to fail in this is to be unfaithful to a great and distinctive part of the Divine commission. It was here that the Church of England herself so lamentably failed in the last century, and the growth of numerous sects around testified to her inability to meet the spiritual wants of the population. However, *tempora mutantur, et nos mutamur in illis*, the same complaint is now directed towards other Christian communities.

NONCONFORMITY ABANDONS THE POOR.—A pamphlet has lately been published by Elliot Stock, of which the Rev. W. Odom is the author, entitled "Nonconformity in Poor Parishes," in which the result of an inquiry into the success of Nonconformists in poverty-stricken districts are given from a variety of sources. Numerous statistics are recorded to show the tendency of Dissenting congregations to abandon chapels in districts which are becoming poorer, and to move to wealthier quarters, where magnificent seatholders may be found; while, on the other hand, there is a manifest reluctance in the first instance to choose for the sphere of their ministrations those haunts of squalor and poverty for which the Gospel is both pre-eminently designed and needed. Mr. Odom has drawn up a list of no less than one hundred and four Dissenting chapels, including twenty-four in London, which have been given up by Nonconformists and purchased by Churchmen for Church purposes. It is to be regretted that this list is not fully printed in an appendix to the pamphlet, as it has already partly appeared in our valuable contemporary, the *Record*. Dr. Hume's evidence concerning Liverpool, given before a House of Lords' Committee in 1859, is also cited as noticeable. "When a district becomes poor, the Dissenting congregations generally migrate; the chapel is given up, and replaced in a better district of the town. Nine Dissenting chapels have occupied twenty-six sites. There have been seventeen migrations, whereas a church is a permanent building for various grades of the population." Nevertheless, failure is not confined to any one section of society, and would not even need passing comment could it be shown to be unmerited.

"Tis not in mortals to command success,
But we'll do more, Sempronius: we'll deserve it."

The Baptist handbooks state that forty-one towns in Lancashire, and seventy-five in Yorkshire have not a single Baptist church, and that there are more than two hundred places in Northumberland without any Nonconformist chapel, and one hundred villages in Hampshire are similarly situated. Nor are there wanting candid statements of Wesleyans to the same effect, as Mr. Odom adduces evidence from the *Methodist Times* that "there are no fewer than fifty-five large towns in Inner London, some of these containing more than fifty thousand souls, without the twinkle of even the smallest Methodist taper light."

MR. SPURGEON ON THIS QUESTION.—Mr. Spurgeon's testimony will be considered of great weight, and he has said: "There is a growing up, even in our Dissenting churches, an evil which I greatly deplore—a despising of the poor. I frequently hear in conversation such remarks as this—'Oh! it is no use trying in such a place as this. You could never raise a self-supporting cause. There are none but poor living in the neighbourhood.' If there is a site to be chosen for a chapel, it is said—'Well, there is such a lot of poor people round about you would never be able to keep a minister.'"

The Rev. George Osborne, an eminent Wesleyan, says: "The extinction of the National Church is to be deplored as one of the greatest calamities which could befall our native country. The Established Church is the great home missionary society of which we have cognisance. * * *

The tendency of Dissent is to deal with the middle classes, and when they forsake a particular neighbourhood the chapel is removed; and were there not some other description of provision made, the neighbourhood would be left without any."

We could scarcely have stronger testimony to the evils of voluntarism and its inferiority to the parochial system. With its little social distinctions and commercial connection the former is admirably adapted for gathering together those that pay and for attracting the shopkeeping class, but it has few charms for those who want, and whose scanty means disable them from renting a pew. On the other hand, the free mission rooms and house to house visitation of the clergy naturally meet the wants of the poor in a far higher degree, and it is at the parsonage and the rectory that assistance and sympathy is sought for in the hour of need and sorrow.

A further reason of the weakness of Nonconformity is found in its adoption of the Congregational principle, for a congregation is in great danger of being engrossed in its own interest in its own neighbourhood, without caring for other neglected places, while the episcopal regime provides that a man of considerable intelligence, and piety, should be set apart to supervise the work of subordinate pastors, and especially to be responsible for supplying the wants of more remote or lapsed districts. Wherever, in fact, pastoral work partakes of a missionary character, a system more or less parochial must be adopted. The sphere of work must be limited to those within reach, and so become territorial rather than congregational, and the episcopal element must so far enter into it that there must be vigilant superintendents whether the supervision employed be exercised by an individual or by a committee. A large-hearted Nonconformist pastor in a southern watering-place once observed, "When the Church does its duty we are nowhere."

THE WORK OF A MOMENT.—Did you never write a letter, and just as you were finishing it, let your pen fall on it, or a drop of ink blot the fair page? It was the work of a moment, but the evil could not be entirely effaced. Did you never cut yourself unexpectedly and quickly? It took days or weeks to heal the wound and even then a scar remained. It is related by Lord Brougham, that one day he occupied a conspicuous place in a group to have his daguerreotype taken. But at an unfortunate moment he moved. The picture was taken, but his face was blurred. Do you ask what application we would make of these facts? Just this:

"It takes a lifetime to build a character; it only takes one moment to destroy it." "Watch and pray," therefore, "that ye enter not into temptation." "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

—Let it not be thought that the life of a good Christian must necessarily be a life of melancholy and gloominess, for he only resigns some pleasures to enjoy others infinitely better.—Pascal.