

ledge of their own Faith, or filial attachment to their own Mother-Church.

On Sundays, for instances, in these Roman Communities, they would no doubt be "excused from the religious Services of the Institution." But what does that mean? It means, probably, that they would be made to sit at a deal table, with their open Bibles before them, while in the distance they would hear sweet music, and the singing of hymns and responses, and be conscious of the fragrance of incense. All this would have an influence on their young minds, and would be likely to make their own religion seem very dull to them. The hold of their own Church over our children's minds would be gradually sapped; and a sort of vague notion would spring up, that, if there is a beautiful religion, exhibiting self-devotion, and a high, uplifting worship, it will be found in the Roman Church alone.

It is often supposed that Sisterhood Life is more or less "Roman." But it is really, as I have said, to guard against Romanising, as well as for the sake of the Christian Home, that we have sought the aid of Sisters.

(To be Continued)

WHY DO EPISCOPALIANS KEEP LENT?

The question is often asked, "Why do Episcopalians keep Lent?" They do so for two reasons: To commemorate the temptation, sufferings and death of Christ and to cultivate and practise the Christian grace of patience and self-denial. Since the Saviour has done so much for humanity, they desire to show their gratitude to Him in a tangible and visible form by some act of sacrifice or deed of kindness and love. Without question such a result must be beneficial to the individual and the Church. There can be no doubt but that it is perfectly proper to keep before the mind the sufferings and death of Christ. We cannot think too much of Him. The great difficulty, even with devout people, is to give Him an ordinary share of thought or time. The world of business, of pleasure, of household cares, would crowd him out of his proper place. Anything, then, that exalts Christ in the hearts and minds of men must be a blessing.

But looking at Lent from a human stand-point, there can come no harm to form an honest effort to keep alive the thought of sacrifice. Anything that rouses men out of themselves; anything that breaks in on the great currents of selfishness which run so swiftly through the world, and turns them back, can only result in good. Men of all creeds and parties now unite to scatter flowers on the graves of those who sacrifice their lives that the Nation might live. By so doing we honour the memory of those noble men and also keep alive the idea of patriotism in the heart of the people. If it be right to revere the memory of the soldier who fell in battle in defence of his native or adopted country, who shall object to the effort to revive the memory of Him whose shoe's latchet the greatest of earth were unworthy to unloose, who died that their race might live?

The number of days included in Lent is forty, not including Sundays. It begins with Ash Wednesday and ends with Easter eve. It first calls attention to the Saviour's days of fasting and temptation in the wilderness. It calls the worshiper to fasting, penitence and sacrifice, and gradually leads the soul to the day of all days, Good Friday, when our Lord was crucified. Can Christians make too much of the Crucifixion? Then it was that innocence was abused, goodness persecuted and love assassinated. Ah yes! the Man of Sorrows is worth our thought and love. It is true; Poverty stood by His cradle, Envy and Malice walked by His side through life, and Revenge and Cruelty

were among the watchers at the closing scenes of His career; yet He was the Saviour of men, meeting every requirement of divine law, and opening up a way of approach to God through faith.

But Lent is a reminder of Easter joys. By Lenten fast and sacrifice we are led to the mystery of Calvary; but its gloom is not eternal or impenetrable. It is brightened by the light of our Saviour's resurrection. We come at length to Easter day with its flowers, its carols, its anthems, and by it are taught that God not only bestows pardon for sin, but eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Who will say that these truths are not worth knowing and preserving?

But aside from the great doctrines the season of Lent emphasizes, it has an influence on the individual. Goethe has said one cannot always be a hero, but one can always be a man. It is doubtless true; but the essence of heroism is sacrifice, and since sacrifice is one of the lessons of Lent, the better nature of man is purified and strengthened. We are made to see that the real happiness of life consists in what we do for others, and not in what we do for ourselves. This is what Jesus meant when He said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Many objections have been urged against the keeping of Lent. A very common one is on the ground of exclusiveness. It has as much foundation, in fact, as the general charge of exclusiveness has against the Church. It is urged that "church people" withdraw themselves suddenly from the world. A wall of separation is erected between the Church and the world which is scarcely seen at other times. But what are the facts? No one is excluded. The service of Lent, like the Book of Common Prayer, is for the use of all who wish them. The line that divides right from wrong is no plainer at Lent than at Christmas-tide. Right, like its originator, is unchangeable. It must be so from the very nature of the case. But there are questions of expediency and consistency. They who observe Lent refrain from certain things, not because they are wrong *per se*, but because they are not expedient or consistent with the season of Lent. It is a time for thought and self-examination; therefore, everything which interferes with that work is set aside.

The faithful engineer now and then carefully examines his engine to see it is in good order and repair. That very examination gives him confidence in the engine. He is familiar with every part; but there are times when the engine must be put in motion. Lent is a season when the machinery of the soul is examined and, if necessary, repaired, so that the active duties of life may be successfully performed.

There is nothing exclusive, then, about the keeping of Lent. For the sake of self-examination one may withdraw from the world, yet all the world may keep Lent if they will. The Christian man is in the world. He must be from the very nature of things. He is a part of it, but, while he discharges every duty, there are times when he thinks more than usual of a suffering Christ, and makes an effort to deny himself for the sake of others.

The season of Lent may be looked upon as a season of revival. It is not a revival of excitement or enthusiasm merely, but of a knowledge and appreciation of the great truths connected with the closing hours of Christ's life. Its sincere observance must result in noble purpose and holy resolves, in deeds of kindness and sacrifice. It is the awakening of the soul out of the sleep of selfishness to the new life, which finds its highest development in the use of every God-given power.

"True worth is in being, not in seeming;
In doing each day that goes by
Some little good; not in dreaming
Of great things to do by and-by."

—J. B. Shepherd, in *Church Life*.

"A THOUGHT AND A PRAYER FOR EVERY DAY IN LENT."

[E. P. DUTTON & Co., N. Y.]

FIFTH WEDNESDAY.—Who would not wish to be a follower of Christ—to be like Him—to imitate Him? Even if the journey be difficult and the way hard, who would not wish to tread the same path which the Master trod? Those who are faithful to Christ here shall hereafter follow Him into glory, and even now their path shall be cheered and enlightened by Him.
Lord Jesus, bid me come after Thee.

FIFTH THURSDAY.—Faith in Christ, and the practice of good for His sake, will form a bond of union which nothing shall be able to break. Other things may bring men together; but religion alone will bind men together; men may seem to be united by other means, but to be truly united men must be spiritually united.—*O Holy Spirit of God, teach me the meaning of those words of inspiration so often read—in Christ—in Him.*

FIFTH FRIDAY.—The Christian is called to walk in newness of life, as one who is alive, as one who is holy, as one who is free—to walk with God—to walk in love—to walk in the Spirit. Are we walking thus—are we resolved so to do—what has been our success in the past—what of the future? Does the past give us hope for the future?—*Help me, Lord, to be true to my Christian calling.*

FIFTH SATURDAY.—There is no room for despondency in the Christian life, but much need of redoubled energy. We want bright hope to spur us onwards. It is not enough for us to mean well—wish well—resolve well, but we must strive—strain every nerve—concentrate all our efforts. Let there be no mistake about our endeavors to take the Kingdom with a quiet enthusiasm, and by a holy violence.—*Bid me, O Lord, be brave and enduring.*

FIFTH SUNDAY.—A lively Church Service does us good—our hearts go forth to God and to one another; there is a lifting up of the countenance, and a lifting up of our whole being, when we sing the praises of God. We forget self—we learn to cast our cares, anxieties and troubles upon God—to shut out the cold, dark world—to look forward to Heaven's rest, and Heaven's eternal harmony.—*O Lord, tune my heart, and open Thou my lips.*

FIFTH MONDAY.—We want praying people, and we want working people in the Church—prayer and work must go together. We cannot expect the divine blessing unless we look up to God, and use, at the same time, our own efforts. Those who cannot possibly do active work for Christ can pray; but those must pray also who can and do work. There is no one who cannot do something for the Redeemer's Kingdom.—*Teach me, Lord, to fill my place aright.*

FIFTH TUESDAY.—How good it would be if we could see God's hand in all that befalls us—if we could thoroughly believe that God is dealing wisely with us—if we could know indeed that, in little things as well as in great, He is our divine Guide; What a comfort to feel that, after all, our lives are not a tangled skein!—*Make me, O Father, like Jesus my Saviour, trustful in my dependence on Thee.*

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