

Canadian Churchman.

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Lessons for Sundays and Holy Days.

January 24th.—THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

Morning.—Isaiah 62. Mat. 13, v. 53 to 14, v. 13.
Evening.—Isaiah 65; or 66. Acts 15, to v. 30.

APPROPRIATE HYMNS for Third and Fourth Sundays after Epiphany, compiled by Mr. F. Gattward, 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:

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

Holy Communion: 197, 320, 323, 557.
Processional: 76, 176, 432, 439.
Offertory: 80, 307, 405, 620.
Children's Hymns: 231, 336, 339, 566.
General Hymns: 35, 273, 297, 406, 430, 487.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

Holy Communion: 194, 319, 322, 558.
Processional: 78, 219, 391, 478.
Offertory: 173, 293, 303, 367.
Children's Hymns: 79, 333, 340, 565.
General Hymns: 77, 218, 285, 308, 523, 547.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

When the light of the sun has guided us safely into the right path, its next use is to discover to us our dangers, and show us how to avoid them. So it is with the light of God's grace. Having guided us into the paths of holiness and peace, its next step is to show us the dangers which surround us, and to teach us where to look for safety. Our chief danger lies in the weakness of our nature; therefore, in the collect, we beseech Almighty God "mercifully to look upon our infirmities." Then the epistle cautions us against the particular failings into which the infirmities of our nature would be most likely to lead us. It points to the pride and malice of our own hearts, as the enemies from whom we have most to fear; for "pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." These are the root of all evil, the very beginning of all sin; they are the tools which the devil makes use of to ruin men's souls; and they are the more dangerous because they do not come upon us all at once, but little by little, taking us in their snares before we are aware, and

making even our best actions and intentions to be sometimes an occasion of falling. Thus a spirit of self-satisfaction in anything we do, when it is felt apart from gratitude to God, who has enabled us both to "will and to do," will lead us on to pride and self-confidence; therefore, let us watch that we be not "wise in our own conceits." When we think we have gained any advantage, or risen one step in our spiritual course, let us immediately ascribe all the glory to God, saying, "Not I, but the grace of God which was with me." And as it is with pride, so also is it with anger. Our self-love first persuades us that we are hardly dealt with, or injured by our neighbours; if not immediately checked, this thought will lead us on to anger—anger will be followed by revenge; and so begins the sin which has been known to end in murder. To avoid so sad a fall we must follow the apostle's injunction of trying to live peaceably with all men; and if others will not live peaceably with us, we must never "recompense evil for evil"; rather should we try to soften their hearts by kindness and forbearance, for as fire softens the hardest substance, so will repeated offices of kindness and charity at last melt even the stony heart of the enemy. In the lesson for this morning we listen to the gracious words of our Saviour Himself, offering us His healing gifts under the emblems of bodily food and refreshment. This water signifies the cleansing of our souls in holy baptism; the wine here mentioned is the precious blood of Christ, which strengthens and refreshes our souls in the Blessed Eucharist; the "milk" is His Word which is now preached to all, as many as are far and near. These are the means by which He now says to the penitent, "I will, be thou clean." By them He strengthens our diseased souls, bringing forth in them the fruits of holiness and righteousness; just as by the rain and the snow brought down from heaven He makes the earth to bring forth and bud. These benefits are offered to all who rightly prepare their hearts to receive them; only to the slothful and slumbering, who wilfully give themselves up to the devouring enemy, are they denied. Let us then examine our hearts by the light which God has made to shine in them, that we may discover the dangers and weaknesses which are most likely to befall us. Let us strive to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in His fear. God hath given us "in His House, and within His walls, a place and a name better than of sons and daughters." If only we are sensible of our "dangers and necessities," there will He be ever present with us, "stretching out His right hand to help and defend us."

MISSIONS.

The season of the Epiphany—the blessed and instructive portion of the year in which the Church commemorates the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles—has arrived, and every true soldier of the Lord is summoned to arms, and asked to carry, or help to carry, the banner of the Cross farther than ever into the dark places of the earth. "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you"—this latent yet omnipotent force transmitted through the ages by the Church, is as strong and as ready to hand now as when first the seventy left the presence of the Lord, and

returned to tell "that even the devils were subject unto them through His name." In this first missionary tour, and in the joyful return of those whom He had sent, we have the triumph of the kingdom of good over the kingdom of evil, and the pledge and assurance of all victories. Our blessed Lord employs the imperfect tense to make clear that He had foreseen the glorious issue, even when He sent them forth: "I saw, as I sent you forth, Satan fall like lightning from heaven." Already He beheld the whole idol-worship of the heathen world, whereof Satan was the soul and informing principle, giving away, its splendour departing, its oracles dumb, its temples forsaken, no longer riding on the high places of the earth, and claiming the homage of the great, and noble, and learned. He saw, when He sent forth His first missionary band, this influence of Satan creeping into obscure corners, and after surviving awhile as the despised superstition of "pagans" and "heathens," villagers and men of the wild heath, expire altogether. "That they may be one in us, that the world may know that Thou hast sent me." Failing so fearfully to carry out this principle of the great Captain, it is a marvel that any progress is reported, any success achieved, any impression made upon the fortress of Satan. Were the Christian forces arrayed as one beneath His banner, the mission commissariat administered as one, the orders of the Commander-in-chief obeyed and carried out in the spirit of a united host, doing all it can to make ready a people prepared for the Lord, ere long the cry would be heard, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet Him." From this Scriptural ideal—true as far as it goes—how far have we departed? The returns of collections for the mission field for '96 are all in, the total the largest yet collected, but it is sad to notice the endless conditions attached to each gift, and the narrow-souled restrictions accompanying each donation. Oh that we could bury ten thousand fathoms deep the suicidal terms of High and Low Church, with all the nonsense and sin and folly that tend to sever the servants and soldiers of "one Lord." "Divide and rule" is Satan's motto, and not in open action, but in the council of those planning the attack on his domain, he sows the deadly seed of hatred, distrust, ambition and selfishness, and when the attack comes to be delivered, discord has honey-combed the rank and file, and the citadel of hell defies the assault and the assailants. We have bishops of our own free selection—free selection brought about by the ballot box—we have mission boards elected by the clergy and lay delegates in Synod assembled. Surely we should have absolute confidence in these boards, and so we say that all moneys collected in the diocese for missions, by whatever organization, or for whatever mission, should have the cognizance and be under the control of the Mission Board, and when these organizations have gathered this money and handed it over to the Mission Board, their labour as loyal Churchmen and Churchwomen ceases. It is absurd, harmful and wrong in every aspect that any organization of Church people should have the power to allot and distribute mission funds apart from the bishops and the Mission Boards. The bishop is the commander-in-chief of his diocese; he knows where to strengthen the line of attack, where to extend the wings without weaken-