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LESSONS for SUNDAYS and HOLY-DAYS.

MAY 30th—5th SUNDAY AFTER EASTER. Morning—Deuteronomy vi. John xi. 47 to xli. 20. Evening—Deuteronomy ix; or x. Hebrews vi.

THURSDAY, MAY 27, 1886.

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

THE ITINERANT SYSTEM.—There can be little doubt that in the past the system of itinerancy amongst the Wesleyan preachers was a source of great strength. It ministered to a popular want, the desire of novelty in the pulpit. However objectionable to some of the congregation any man might be, he was tolerated in turn with others more acceptable. However poor the gifts of a preacher, he had every chance of improvement and of putting his little powers in the very best light. A sermon preached at a dozen places was sure to "go" for better, than a dozen sermons from one pulpit. A very small stock of sermons only was needed to keep up preaching from a number of pulpits in a circuit, and when the whole circuit was changed every three years the stock was fresh for another three years term. The popular idea that Methodist preachers have a special gift for extemporaneous discourses is a delusion arising out of their readiness to deliver without notes, sermons which have been recited scores of times. We have heard old Wesleyans say that when a minister comes back to an old circuit they can recognise his old discourse at once, and not infrequently they give them a nick-name, after they have been heard a few times. A story is told of a discourse on the Ten Virgins, which at last was called the "Old Maids," so long had it been familiar to the people.

The system is admirable in theory, but it has been found utterly destructive of habits of study, owing to the great ease of providing sermons to satisfy a large circle of congregations, whose taste has been vitiated by this system of itinerancy—the demand being not for thought, but fluency. One of the *Methodist Times* stigmatizes itinerancy as one of "our stereotyped and old fashioned methods of

activity, against which the ever growing democracy of other cities revolts every year more and more." The same paper declares that "we have hitherto done nothing on an adequate scale to adapt our operations to the totally changed condition of English society. Hence our half empty chapels, although the evangelical gospel which we preach was never so popular and attractive to Englishmen as it is to day." The *Churchman* commenting on this, says that the reason for this emptying of Methodist Churches is that the Church of England has now so thoroughly adapted herself to the wants of every class of the community that the occupation of the Methodist local preacher is well nigh gone.

A LITTLE COMMON SENSE ABOUT LAY HELP.—In reply to a somewhat ill-timed letter, a writer in the *Church Times* in reply says: "As to manual or other labour unfitting men for evangelical work, the whole spirit of the Church for the first fifteen centuries is against any such idea. The monasteries, in which most of our great missionaries were bred, were hives of industry, not only for manuscript and artistic work, but for agricultural and all kinds of domestic labour, to provide food and clothes for the inmates and the poor, to send missionaries to the heathen abroad, and to raise those noble piles of buildings to the honor and glory of God which are the pride and glory of every Christian state. It is very necessary, no doubt, that the regular parochial clergy should be free to spend their whole lives in their work, but there is nothing in the constitution of the Church to prevent business men giving their spare time to the home mission work of the Church amongst the poor of our great cities; and there is certainly nothing in the life and teaching of our Blessed Lord and His Apostles to forbid it either. I have much faith in the wisdom of our Christian forefathers, and admire the way in which they adapted the machinery of the Church to suit the requirements of the times in which they lived, just as they would do at the present day had they been brought face to face with nineteenth century life and civilization. And the principle they acted upon is the right one for us to follow, viz., that while the Church cannot and must not alter 'the Faith once delivered to the saints' to please the times, she may and must from time to time alter the machinery by which that faith is propagated. The 'lesson of Korah' has no more to do with the subject than with 'the man in the moon.' The question before us is not, 'Shall the Church allow business men to become evangelists and mission-workers?' because she allows them to do this work already, whether we like it or not; but 'Shall the Church set up proper standards and orders, to enable such work to be carried on in the Church's way, and not in the slipshod way much of it is done at present?' I have seen men sent out into the streets 'to say a few words for the Master,' with out the least training or even experience at public speaking; and the result may be better imagined than described. I have seen what are called 'simple mission services,' by laymen carried on in a way not at all likely to promote the glory of God or the good of man; one man preaching extempore prayers, another reading a chapter from the Bible as if reciting his part for a private theatrical, while 'the conductor of the mission' introduces the next speaker, with almost the dignity of a third-rate music-hall chairman announcing, 'the great so-and-so is about to oblige;' and much more as painful. And all this with the consent of the clergy, who tell them 'they don't wish to tie their hands,' to 'do just as they like,' etc., which soon means doing something he does not like, with the usual result.

Now, if this is what is understood by lay mission work, I am opposed to it. 'Simple mission services,' may be as real, as solemn, and as Churchy as the grander services, and must of

course be carried on under the parochial clergy. I believe it would be a fatal mistake for the Church to adopt revival and Salvation Army services because they seem popular for the moment; and I should certainly refuse to be sent here and there by irresponsible laymen, calling themselves leaders of the Evangelical this, that, or the other. By all means let us remember the 'lesson of Korah,' but do not let us forget the lesson of Calvary, 'All this have I done for thee; what hast thou done for Me?'

WHAT HOME RULE WOULD BRING.—Taking up several Irish newspapers lately we have been much struck with the tone of their threats against the non-Romanist people and institutions of Ireland, when once there is a Parliament established at Dublin. The Church of Ireland is to be annihilated piecemeal by a systematic boycotting of her clergy and members. Trinity College is to be placed under the absolute rule of the Papacy. Other educational institutions now owned and ruled by Protestants are to be swamped by adverse legislation, and the whole force of Home Rule is to be directed to secure the absolute supremacy of the papal power throughout Ireland. The eloquent month-piece of the Home Rulers speaks out plainly. We give below what the *Montreal Witness* says of him:

"Sympathy is impossible with Mr. Davitt's alleged views about Ulster. There is a story in the Gospel of a man who, after receiving great mercy from his lord, met his fellow-servant, and, taking him by the throat, showed him no mercy whatever. The indignation of every hearer kindles against the tyrant and justifies the master in withdrawing all his benevolent intentions, on the score that the receiver was not fit for the freedom accorded to him. The language of brutal tyranny could not be better imitated than in the words ascribed by the reporter to Mr. Davitt:

"Leave them alone to us. We will make short work of those gentry. They are not Irishmen, but only English and Scotchmen, who have settled among us. It would be an absurdity to allow them to dictate to Irishmen as to how Ireland should be governed. The Nationalists will wage war to the death against any bill which does not subject Ulster to the rule of the statutory parliament at Dublin."

"If this is the spirit of Ireland, it is abundantly clear that Home Rule in Ireland must be followed by Home Rule in Ulster. Ireland may well say, an enemy hath done this."

A COMMENDABLE CHARITY.—The customs of young girls presenting themselves as candidates for Confirmation in toilets specially prepared for the occasion is not likely to be abolished. It has both antiquity and human nature on its side, and with such a backing the habit will resist attack successfully. The custom has one weak point, it discriminates against the poor, and in that it is indeed very vulnerable. To obviate this difficulty the Roman Church has in many parishes an association for providing those girls whose parents are poor with a first communion costume. These constitute a full suit, and are of such quality and material that the poor boys and girls who receive them are, on the day of their first communion, upon an equal footing, as regards dress, with the children of well-to-do families, being decently dressed from head to foot. The dresses are distributed at an appropriate ceremony, at which the Bishop presides, and gives his fatherly advice to the recipients. This might with much advantage be adopted by us. Many ladies would take delight in preparing suitable costumes for those whom they would be a comfort and relief at such a time, and so graceful an act of sisterly sympathy and goodness would be deeply felt by our poorer families.